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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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Bandera launched as RP's 1st compact newspaper

VAT law challenged at SC

Constitutionality of President's tax powers questioned

By TJ Burgonio and Armand Nocum

SENATE Minority leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said yesterday he and six other opposition senators will question before the Supreme Court next week the constitutionality of the newly signed Value-Added Tax Law which grants President Macapagal-Arroyo the power to raise the VAT rate.

The controversial measure, signed last Tuesday, raises the VAT rate of 10 percent, but gives Malacañang the authority to raise it to 12 percent in January next year under certain conditions.

"We're going to question the undue delegation of powers given to the President in the matter of that so-called standby authority," Pimentel told reporters before the ambassador lived. He insisted that the power to raise taxes, such as VAT, is vested only in Congress and cannot be delegated to the President.

Pimentel said that Senators Sergio Osmeña III, Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, Jinggoy Estrada, Loren "Lol" Legarda, Alfredo Lim and Jamby Madrigal had committed to sign the petition.

Yesterday, the House party-list group Abakada Guro filed a 20-page petition asking the Supreme Court to declare the VAT law "unconstitutional in its entirety." The group representing teachers named as respondents Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima and Internal Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr.

Petitioners submit that while Congress may have been permitted in certain instances in strategic to powers to the executive department, it cannot cross to the extent one where such delegation amounts to a surrender of the power of taxation exclusively vested by the Constitution in the legislature," said Samson Alcantara, Abakada Guro president.

"No amount of authority emanating from Congress can invest

JAPANESE Imperial Army soldier Tsuneki Nakauchi, one of two octogenarians believed to be stragglers from World War II who recently emerged from the mountains of Mindanao, is shown in this undated photo released by a family member (below). Yoshiko Nakauchi (left) visits the tomb of her soldier brother-in-law in his hometown of Ochi in Ehime, Japan. —

2 suspected Japanese stragglers sighted

JAPAN is investigating claims of two elderly men who say they are former Japanese soldiers who have been hiding in the mountains of Mindanao since World War II.

Japanese Embassy representatives were dispatched to Cotabato City to interview the men in a meeting that was being arranged by a third person who contacted the embassy, embassy official Masato Watanabe said.

Media reports in Japan said the two octogenarians had lived in Mindanao and that their apparent suggested they were former soldiers. One years apart and they were separated from their division and that they have been ...al to return to Japan but feared they would face a court-martial.

Japanese Embassy spokesperson Mahito Ogawa cautioned that it was

PNP chief says entire RP now rid of 'jueteng'

By Artemio M. Nocum and Lodge A. del Puerto

ANTI-VICE heat was on.

"The attitude of Lacson" is now "jueteng" free, said Philippine National Police Director General Avelino Lumibao is thanking everyone for it.

Lumibao yesterday met with the Inter-Feeding panel of the Department of Justice and said operations of the illegal numbers game had been stopped but only for the reprieve but throughout Luzon.

Said that certain quarters had doubted the PNP's ability to accomplish the task in so short a time, Lumibao replied: "Well, everybody surprised. Everybody [was last] to unions ... It's time to betting, nobody is collecting. We have to thank everybody for their cooperation."

But in a press conference at the airport in Legazpi City, Lumibao said the field reports that his office received in 48 hours on Thursday had yet "to be validated."

He said that at 11 p.m. yesterday he would again receive from his field commanders "[betting, bet] confirmation regarding local chiefs of police, mayors and city/area leaders.

"After these, I will be sending out sustained and regional teams to validate [the confirmations]. If the teams find out that the [field commanders] are not complying

To probe or not to probe: Senators split

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE SENATE inquiry into "jueteng" will proceed, at least for its first scheduled hearing on Monday, but senators are gearing for a fight over an administration senator's proposal to scrap the hearings altogether.

"Let them try. We will fight them all the way," Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. yesterday told the bayanan in Cebu City.

Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago on Thursday said the Senate should leave the investigation to the proper authorities, saying the legislature did not have the time, the skills or the ability to determine the guilt of government officials and private citizens accused of receiving payoffs.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, head of the powerful rules committee that determines how the chamber conducts its business, and Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid, chair of one of the two committees authorized to handle the investigation, backed Santiago's call and said the inquiry could be ended after the first hearing on Monday.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said he was leaving the decision to Lapid, chair of the committee on games, amusements and sports, and Sen. Manuel Villar, chair of the committee on public order and security. One of the resolutions that had prompted the joint inquiry was filed by Drilon himself.

But Villar, who is also a member of the inquiry, said it would not be good for the Senate to stop the inquiry.

The opposition, meanwhile, denounced the move of Malacañang's allies.

Pimentel warned of public

BATHING BEAUTY

Miss Philippines Dianna Cabrera parades before the judges in the swimsuit competition of the 2010 Miss Universe pageant in Bangkok, Thailand, on Thursday. Cabrera earlier placed fifth in the Best National Costume Parade of the contest that ends on May 30. —

GMA on Mike: He'll be back soon

By Christine O. Avendaño

SEE DEPED placid over it.

Pressured by reporters on the whereabouts of her conspicuously absent husband, President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday he was away on a trip—and kept alive the mystery of where he really was and when he was coming home.

Talking to media during a visit to Legazpi City, Ms Arroyo avoided giving a definite date for the return of Interior Secretary Jose Miguel Arroyo.

"Anyway don't you guys want him to disappear?" she joked, and then laughed.

Then, turning serious, she said: "He's coming back, soon."

Arroyo left for Singapore last week a day after three supposed farewell openings claimed that he and son, Dampaya Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo, went home for a belated Father's Day parade.

The First Gentleman's camp have said Arroyo had gone to Singapore with siblings Rep. Ignacio Arroyo and Heidee, and that the trip had been planned beforehand.

PRIOR RESTRAINT

Journalists hit censors' order

By Michael Lim Ubac

LAWMAKERS and journalists yesterday blasted a government memorandum requiring prior state approval of public affairs programs on television as tantamount to muzzling the media and a throwback to the days of Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship.

They urged Malacañang to reverse the memo issued by the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board, calling it an attack on civil rights and a violation of the Constitution.

MTRCB officials could not be reached for comment on what prompted the Board to issue memorandum circular No. 07-10, but Undersecretary Cornelio Laguardia, confirmed in a radio interview that it had been issued.

Dated last May 17, the circular spelled out what it could was a decision of the Supreme Court in January "that public affairs programs, news documentaries, news-political editorials, and all other programs of the same category are television programs that are subject to MTRCB review and approval in accordance with Section 3 of Presidential Decree No. 1986."

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SATURDAY, MAY 29, 2004
WEATHER FORECAST
Second FRONTPAGE

HOSTILE WITNESS
Former Internal Revenue Commissioner Lilia Tan, principal witness in the tax evasion case against Fortune Tobacco and Jaime Lucio Tan, is cross-examined by defense lawyer Ibrahim Mendoza during yesterday's resumption of the trial in Manila. The grilling centered on the defense court's contention that the case was filed by the Ramos administration in retaliation for Tan's support for then presidential candidate Ramon Mitra Jr. in the 1992 election. Chito denied the insinuation, saying she was not aware that Tan supported Mitra.

Coast Guard to use 'profiling' vs sea terrorism

By Lira B. Saluworks

THE PHILIPPINE Coast Guard will begin next week a program called "terrorist profiling" that will subject passengers on commercial vessels to close scrutiny in an attempt to tighten security aboard ships and ferries and boost the government's anti-terrorist campaign.

Commodore Wilfredo Tamayo, head of Task Force Sea Marshals, said profiling is now commonly employed in international air and sea ports. He said a data base is being compiled from intelligence units of police agencies and the armed forces to support the initiative.

"It's part of updating our measures so that we could better protect ships and passengers," Tamayo told the Inquirer.

Tamayo's task force was formed following the bombing of the Superferry 14 on Feb. 27 that left over 100 people dead or missing. The incident is regarded as one of the worst terrorist attacks in the country.

Random checks

Tamayo said the PCG does bank will maintain information on age, status, traveling practices and behavior of potential terrorists. Sea marshals will check inconsistencies in manners and peculiar changes in itineraries, like profiles measuring. Tamayo said the questioning would be done properly so as not to offend the ship passengers.

He said random checks will also be conducted during the voyage.

The task force, composed of personnel from the PCG, the police and the armed forces, is responsible for keeping a close watch on port areas and ships for dangerous materials or contraband, including people. Sea marshals act as order dispensers among passengers and investigate crimes on ships.

A team of six sea marshals is assigned on a ship throughout its journey, working with the shipping companies' security officers.

Gov't lawyers dispute Erap camp's claim of victory at BSP

By Nelson S. Flores

SPECIAL Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio yesterday disputed claims of a major legal victory by lawyers of deposed President Estrada as a result of the inspection at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas last Wednesday.

The inspection was done to determine how large a package (P1.86 million in cash) would be.

Estrada's lawyers claimed the inspection showed that the P326 million could not be contained in the four boxes allegedly delivered to Estrada's house.

But Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, "client" Singson, the government's main witness in the plunder case against Estrada, testified that P326 million of Erap's share in jueteng money went to the jacket of president.

Villa-Ignacio, who earlier said that nobody, including Singson, had claimed that the entire P326 million was delivered in bulk at one time to Estrada, said the defense lawyers obviously overlooked the point made by the P326 million.

Villa-Ignacio said bank records showed that only P96 million of the P326 million kickbacks for Estrada had been withdrawn by Clarissa "Ading" Ang on the day that the delivery was allegedly made to Estrada at his residence at No. 1 Polk St., Greenhills, San Juan.

"On the day it was brought to Estrada's residence, Ang withdrew P90 million from the account containing the P326 million at the Mandaluyong City branch of Westmont Bank on Aug. 12, 1998 and that says what was brought to Estrada's residence," Villa-Ignacio said.

'Several withdrawals'

He said that Singson was not aware of how Ang decided to distribute the money. He said that as far as Singson was concerned, "P130 million was Estrada's share from the P200 million tobacco excise tax."

Villa-Ignacio also said "several withdrawals" had already been made by Ang, Estrada's gambling buddy, before the P96 million was withdrawn and actually delivered to the Polk St. residence.

He noted that date was the one on why Estrada became angry with Singson and reminded the latter that his share was supposed to amount to P130 million.

Ang is a co-accused with Estrada in the plunder project and if legal use of an alias charges before the Sandiganbayan Special Division presided by Justice Teresita de Castro.

Last Wednesday, lawyer Rene Saguisag asked the Sandiganbayan to acquit Estrada from the charges that he received P326 million in kickbacks from the Fortune Tobacco excise tax.

Saguisag claimed the inspection clearly proved that a bat, 12" wide, 16" high and 18" long, similar to the one that Ang allegedly used in delivering the cash to Estrada, could only contain 30 bundles of cash with each bundle containing P1 million.

He said that if four boxes were indeed used in the delivery, as alleged by the prosecution, then only a total of P60 million would have been delivered and not P326 million as stated in the complaint filed.

"We, however, would like to clarify that Estrada did not receive a single centavo from the Fortune tobacco case as alleged by Singson," Lawyer Estelito P. Mendoza said. He claimed that the purpose of this secret inspection is only to prove the impossibility of his claim," Saguisag stressed.

Saguisag said the prosecution panel should "stop wasting time and tampering our intelligence." He said this kind of diversion were "unbecoming at midnight or in the early morning.

"You don't do that in a very public place like the residence of Estrada, which is always full of people and security personnel," he said.

Jose Flaminiano, another Estrada lawyer, said the inspection was a major victory for the defense panel. He said the charges that Estrada received P130 million in kickbacks from the tobacco excise tax would not hold water in the light of the recent ocular inspection.

Senate minority presses Enrile's ouster from CA

By TJ Burgonio

THE SENATE minority bloc would push for the ouster of Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile from the Commission on Appointments in the face of the majority's hardline stance to lay off from the issue.

"We're continuing with our move. We're urging on," Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said yesterday, insisting that the opposition was merely exercising its power to remove a member if had membership in the powerful body.

Pimentel, however, voiced hope the majority would soften up and act on his earlier manifestation that some members of the opposition had signed on to drop Enrile from the CA.

"The ball is now in the hands of the majority to give the formality of their concurrence to the move taken by the minority to replace Manong Johnny [Enrile] with Jamby Madrigal," he said at a press forum in Manila.

This would break the impasse between the majority and minority blocs on how to resolve the issue, he said.

Pimentel found an ally in former Sen. Francisco "Kit" Tatad who argued that it was logical for the majority to support the manifestation of the minority after it was presented on the floor.

Taking note

"They don't have to ratify it votes. They only have to take note," Tatad, a former party mate of Enrile in the Partido ng Masang Pilipino, said of the motion for the removal of Enrile from the CA.

Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan had declared that the majority bloc would act on the manifestation on two conditions: if the opposition had submitted all names to vacate it and if the controversy has run its course after legislative work.

Earlier, Pangilinan said Senate President Franklin Drilon, who chairs the CA, had taken the position that the minority bloc should resolve the issue among themselves.

On Tuesday, Pimentel manifested on the floor that he, Senate Deputy Majority Leader Ralph Recto, Senators Ernesto Herrera, Loren "Loi" Legarda, Alfredo Lim and Jamby Madrigal had agreed to oust Enrile from the CA.

They accused Enrile of supporting Malacañang's opposition at the CA hearings, even move to declare uncommunity leader in the body.

Enrile, however, insisted he could only be ousted as the CA minority leader, but not as a member, arguing that his chair to a seat in the body was based on his party affiliation. He also flatly denied his colleagues' charges.

Pimentel agreed with Enrile's contention that one's membership in the CA was based on his party affiliation, as provided for by the Constitution, but insisted that it was he who nominated Enrile to the body.

"It's the minority which decides what position senator will go and because I happened to be Minority Leader at the time we were assigning senators to various committees and the commission, I was the one who nominated the name of Senator Enrile as a member of the CA," he said.

"The party becomes relevant only in the matter of sending the senator to the forum," Pimentel said.

A staff of Enrile clarified that Estrada, Ejercito and Lim were not a party to the agreement, but Pimentel insisted they were.

At the Senate, Pimentel reiterated that the majority bloc couldn't think however able to see on his manifestation and course with it.

'Pontius Pilate'

"I think some members of the majority are acting under a strong notion that they have absolutely nothing to say on this. They have nothing to say if their intention is to tell us what to do, but the formality of their saying 'yes' ... [to member matter]," he said.

Lim, a former administration senator, is of "acting like Pontius Pilate washing their hands because they also have an objective here: they want to keep the minority in a sort of a demoralized situation so that we can't move."

Drilon said the majority should not be blamed for the minority's woes. "You should not interfere in this point is simply because we do not know for certain who truly speaks for the minority," he said.

Malacañang also does not want to intervene in the ouster issue, although it is thankful for Enrile for the opposition senator's support on certain issues.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the Palace would endure not interfere in the dispute involving the Senate minority.

"We can only go by what we have seen or read, and as far as we can see from the general senate support the Palace or some senators and we thank him for the support," Bunye told reporters Thursday.

He mentioned, for one, the support given by Enrile to the video linked Erin bill in Congress.

Gabriel Claudio, presidential adviser on political affairs, said yesterday he did not see Drilon the positions taken by Enrile should be labeled as pro-administration or not.

Claudio said that Enrile might have supported some issues in "a matter of principles."

With a report from Christine O. Avendaño

UNAUTHORIZED REBELS
Unarmed members and supporters of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front cross checkpoint Barit as they pass a military checkpoint in Maguindanao. They are on their way to a consultative assembly as part of the peace talks process with the government.

300 Filipinos in Iraq camp go on strike

By Nikko Dizon

SOME 300 overseas Filipino workers employed at a US military camp in Iraq went on strike this week to protest poor working conditions, the Department of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

The workers, under contract with Prime Projects International and Bilog Transport and Haul, are based in Camp Cooke in the province of Taji.

According to a DFA statement, "on 16 May 2005, 300 Filipino workers brought to the attention of PPI (Prime Projects International) and OSK (Bilog Transport and Haul), manpower and logistics providers for the operating US base, their employment contract disputes pertaining to working conditions and working hours within the base."

The OFWs working at the US controlled Camp Cooke were later joined by 500 other foreign workers from India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, the DFA said.

The OFWs' issues on working conditions basically pertains to the members that there should be enough facilities to protect them from the heat and the cold," foreign Affairs spokesperson Hilbay Augusto told the Inquirer in a phone interview.

Augusto said initial information on the DFA received about the labor dispute did not mention total resignation by the work place.

Augusto added that Chargé d' Affaires Eduardo Endaya of the Philippine Embassy in Iraq was told "working out issues, such as ideal working hours."

The DFA official said only the OFWs but a deadline prompted the company to prepare for the return of Filipino workers to the Philippines by booking two chartered flights via the Dubai International Airport.

For Endaya convinced labor leaders to end their protest and return to work by promising to take up their grievances and concerns with PPI and KBR officials.

US-based KBR manages non-combat related operations of military installations in Iraq, while PPI recruits Filipino workers for them, the DFA said.

The 300 OFWs have been in Iraq before the government's deployment ban of Filipino workers to Iraq in July last year and previous legal working papers from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA).

Upon Endaya's recommendation, the DFA through Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs Jose Brillantes, has brought the complaints of the OFWs to the attention of the POEA. With AFP

No more new taxes, says GMA adviser

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

AFTER the expanded valued-added tax (VAT), the government is unlikely to impose new tax measures in the next five years, Albay Rep. Joey Salceda said yesterday.

Salceda said the VAT was likely to be the last tax measure to be endorsed and signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo before her term.

"With the VAT law, the core component of the fiscal reform program is complete. We don't need more new taxes," said Salceda, an economic adviser of the President.

The measure that new tax proposals such as the proposed franchise tax on telecommunications firms or the 50-centavo tax on text messages were not likely to get Malacañang's backing.

Salceda said there was no need to impose new taxes because the expanded VAT should generate at least P92 billion next year, with the imposition of premium and electricity sales as the coverage of the 10 percent tax.

"The P95 billion projected hike in revenues, which only assumes a 9% percent collection efficiency rate, is substantially higher than the P80 billion the government needed to reduce its budget deficit within the next five years," said Salceda in a phone interview.

When collected fully, the expanded VAT would generate a good P225 billion in new revenues annually.

Salceda, who sits with the President in Albay yesterday where she rallied him to be "political vandals" during her remaining years at the throne.

The VAT bill, which also gives the President a standby authority to raise the VAT rate to 12 percent starting next year, was on top of the P36 billion additional revenues from tax sin or tax bills approved earlier—the increase in excise taxes on alcohol and cigarettes and the lateral attrition bill which rewards or punishes collecting agencies on their revenue performance.

The three tax measures were the only bills approved of the eight tax proposals the President unveiled shortly after her proclamation last year.

Salceda said the President would focus for the rest of her term in the privatization of the remaining assets/assets and the improvement of tax collection efforts.

The government's scheduled sale of the National Power Corp.'s transmission and power generation facilities and the unpressured shares in San Miguel Corp. would generate at least P300 billion in new revenues for the government.

Salceda said the privatization of Napocor would complete the government's rationalization of the state power sector. The government is steadily reducing its subsidies on electricity rates by charging market rates to consumers while privatizing Napocor would reduce the government's debt payments. The power subsidies and debt exposures have been largely blamed for the government's chronic budget deficit since the 1980s.

Govs bare plot vs GMA

THE LEAGUE of Provinces of the Philippines yesterday revealed an alleged plot to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo, replace her with Vice President Noli de Castro and promote one of the provincial governors to the second most powerful office in the land.

League president Sobod Constantino Fortunato said he and several governors received by mail letters from a "shadowy" group calling itself Kusinta, inviting the governors to support moves to replace Ms Arroyo through extra-constitutional means.

"It was signed by a certain Ricardo Concepcion. He gave his addresses as Quezon City, Manila and Bulacan," Fortunato said in a news conference yesterday.

"We've already submitted copies of the letter to the police and the military for verification and further investigation," he said. Norman Bordadora

2 sisters who failed customs lifestyle check suspended for six months

By Nelson Flores

CHRISTMAS Simon Marcelo yesterday suspended for six months without pay two customs workers in the Bureau of Customs who flunked the lifestyle check of the Department of Finance and who allegedly amassed a fortune beyond their known income.

"The Office of the Ombudsman found during the initial evaluation that the documentary proofs adduced constitute strong evidence of guilt for dishonesty and grave misconduct," Marcelo said of sisters Ana Marie Concepcion Magkasong and Mathilde Concepcion Millare.

Assistant Ombudsman and spokesperson Emesto Sioco said that an "initial evaluation" of documents submitted by complainants Tess Francia Flores, Nenpalito Lazaro and Melchor Pi. et showed "strong evidence" against the two sisters.

Removal from office

Magkasong and Millare had been "preventively" suspended to inhibit them from harassing potential witnesses and tampering evidence that could be used against them.

Marcelo said that if the sisters were found guilty of charges, they could be removed from government service.

Apart from the administrative charges of dishonesty and grave misconduct, Magkasong and Millare also face charges of violating the Anti-Graft Law (RA 3019), the unplanned Wealth Law (RA 1379), Federal Standards for Public Officials (RA 6713), as well as perjury and falsification of documents.

In its complaint, the DOF said the "substantial property ownership and lifestyles of both sisters were undoubtedly manifestly out of proportion to and unfair, in any manner, be justified by their lawful income."

Authorities were still trying to secure the alleged ill-gotten properties of Magkasong and Millare which include a P1.5-million lotus and a P1.4-million Ford Expedition.

In its complaint filed with the Ombudsman, the Revenue Integrity Protection Service (RIPS) of the DOF disclosed that the assets of the two sisters should also be the subject of forfeiture proceedings.

Millare's Lotus and Magkasong's Expedition should be "susceptible to forfeiture and restitution proceedings," under the Ill-Gotten Wealth Law (RA 1379) and should be confiscated by government unless a civil case is eventually filed in court.

Millare is a special deputy collector at Naia earning almost P20,000 a month while Magkasong is a Customs operation officer assigned to the Port of Manila. RIPS also disclosed that Millare had an "unusual interest" in pirated DVDs/VCDs shipments since December 2003.

Pirated DVDs

According to the complaint filed by Flores, Lazaro and Pilo the Naia Customs Police Division had already "recommended the filing of administrative charges" against Magkasong in connection with shipments of DVDs/VCDs smuggled into the country in January 2004.

"Despite the recommendation not made more than a year ago the last alleged interest and involvement in the shipments of pirated DVDs, no legal action has been taken against her to date," the complaint read.

Records also showed that Millare had a residence in Malabon, that she earned a house and lot in Tarlac, agricultural lots in Zambales and Sorsogon City, a 6,000-square meter property in Mabalacat, Bataan, and had gone abroad "six times," only three of which were allowed by the DOF.

She also entered several cars, including a speedboat, as well as trucks and vans "purportedly for business purposes."

Among the identified cars under from the Lexus were a Honda Civic, a Nissan Exalta, a Honda CRV, a 2002 Pajero and a 2000 Toyota RAV4.

To probe or not to probe: Senators split

From page A1

backlash should the investigation be scrapped.

Sen. Ramon Revilla Jr., who said he had witnesses who would give "substantial" information about jueteng protectors in high places, questioned the motive of House blocking the inquiry.

"If they succeed to stop it, the media will have to take over because the people are entitled to have some kind of 'in' organs after a long foreplay," he said, referring to the past weeks when the issue had been played up in the media.

A police official had earlier claimed that three close relatives of a high government official were on the take. A supposed jueteng operator and one bagman also told the Inquirer that they had collected protection money for President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband Jose Miguel Arroyo and their eldest child Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo—a charge denied by the congressman himself and the First Gentleman's lawyer Jose Justiniano.

House, too

The House of Representatives will push through with its own inquiry into the jueteng scandal, according to House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles and Davao Oriental Rep. Joel Mayo Almario, chair of the committee on games and amusements.

The two also vowed to scrutinize with the inquiry because of the revelation earlier filed by theologue Rep. Rolin Golez.

"This [resolution] has to be given due course," said Nograles, ignoring the comments of Senate Santiago and of Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay that the two chambers of Congress must not in the best position to look into the issue.

Almario said the House committee on public order and safety would not be stopped from its hearings on Golez's resolution "even if an independent commission is created or [despite] the ongoing probe by the Department of Justice."

"Congress is independent from the Palace and its legislative functions cannot be delegated. But through the course of investigation, we and the chair [Sen.] will be co-partners [with] him in the House," Nograles said.

But he appealed for "an honest probe in aid of legislation and congressional oversight, and not a partisan witchhunt against the administration or current opposition officials who were previously responsible for the jueteng deals."

He added: "The President respects the mandate of Congress and never meddles in its affairs, especially when it involves an investigation on allegations against members of the First Family or her Cabinet."

His position

Lapid drew comfort from Santiago's statement that the Senate should leave the investigation to the National Bureau of Investigation or the Philippine National Police.

"That is my position from the very start but I did not want to say that because I'm accused of trying to protect some people," Lapid said by phone.

Pimentel had asked that Lapid inhibit himself from the investigation because of his links with Pampanga, where jueteng is rampant, and with Rodolfo "Boy" Pineda, tagged as a powerful jueteng lord.

"I've said before that if anybody has evidence against anyone then should file charges in court and not the Senate. We should follow the President's position," said Lapid, an ally and protege of the Arroyo.

Lapid said the hearing set for Monday would continue because the invitations had been sent. But he said he was sure should decide on the day whether to continue or end the inquiry altogether.

Six people have been invited for the hearing set at 1 p.m. on Monday: Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao, Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. chair Efraim Genuino, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office head Sergio Valencia and Bohol Rep. Erico Aumentado, chair of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines.

Lapid would have invited only the five government officials because he wanted to focus the inquiry on the legislation aspect. But Villar suggested that at least Cruz be invited to explain his claim that some government officials were protecting jueteng operations because they were on the take.

All-out prosecution

Pimentel said: "If after the first hearing it can be planned that Erik will come out of it in terms of new and credible information, then the hearings should forthwith be terminated."

He reiterated his position that what was needed was "all-out prosecution and immediate conviction of the guilty under the amended anti-gambling law."

"We cannot allow Senate hearings to be used as instruments for destructive partisan politics arising from what may turn out to be sweeping and baseless allegations," he said.

Villar warned against the Senate lacking out of the investigation, which he disclosed would happen.

"It's not good for us to scrap the investigation because it would send the signal that we're afraid of something," he said, adding:

"There is a tendency given to my committee. We still investigate. We still pursue that under the normal process."

Similar comments were aired by Sens. Jinggoy Estrada and Assistant Maj. Gregorio Honasan and Cerilles.

Fears coming true

Pimentel said his fears had started to come true. He had warned that Malacañang was moving to scuttle the investigation.

"I think they [administration officials] are afraid that the forget of suspicion will reveal sadly point in Malacañang and the First Family. But let the telephones [that in this point, there is no evidence that links them," he said.

Pimentel warned of dire consequences if the Senate yielded to alleged Malacañang pressure to stop the inquiry.

"The committees will put themselves in a hole from which they can never get out. They will court public opprobrium, for public misinformation," he said.

Pimentel expected Santiago's proposal to leave the matter to the PNP or the NBI, saying the PNP had a dismal record in stamping out jueteng.

"If we accede to that call, the jueteng lords and the corrupted public officials and enablers will be very happy," he said.

Iacono said he was not surprised by Santiago's call.

"The legislators has played tomorrow many times in the past, as it involved somebody by the name of Jose Pidal. [Sen.] Fidel Ramos was accused of pocketing millions of pesos out of several assistants received into by the government. Of course, we must understand where the good senator is coming from, being with the administration," Iacono said.

"Why did they not ask to stop the Senate investigation of this kind in the past? Why only now?" he said. *With reports from Michael Lim Ubac in Manila, Antonio Napallacan and Victor F. Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas bureau*

PNP chief . . .

From page A1

with the certificates that they made, they will be summarily relieved," he said.

He urged the Municipal mayors, who are in the area nonbelonging, announced long-term plans to help those who would be economically displaced by the halt in jueteng operations.

"I have instructed [Assistant Secretary Angelo Reyes] that in places deprived on jueteng, fish or jueteng-negligible, we can have road-to-farm projects from those funds.

He also said those who would be displaced would understandably "not come out and sit in or insinuate themselves."

The President was in Albay to attend the inauguration of the PNP Southern Luzon police station and visit the Bicol area.

'99 percent'

In Manila, Chief Supt. Florante Soguin, chief of the PNP's Special Anti-Illegal Gambling Task Force, declared that the whole of Luzon was "99 percent cleared of the jueteng menace."

"As of 2 p.m. today, the regional directors of eight Luzon-based police regional officers certified that jueteng activities have completely stopped in their areas of responsibility as a result of continuous and relentless police operations," Soguin told reporters.

To explain why Luzon was only "99 percent" jueteng free, Soguin said Pollilo island in Quezon? A town not able to certify clearance.

"Only the municipality of Pollilo [named] Pollilo island because of bad weather," he said. "Otherwise, jueteng is no more in the whole of Luzon.

Soguin said the last region to declare itself jueteng free was Region IV-A or Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon). Police submitted its report at around noon yesterday.

But the militant Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas is not impressed.

"Jueteng will just go underground for now and return with a vengeance next time if its main financiers ... remain intact," KMP information officer Carl Ala said in a text message.

Quoting reports from the KMP provincial chapters, Ala said jueteng operations had merely moved to the barrios. "This is happening in regions earlier declared jueteng free," he said.

Nothing bloody happened'

Asked what Lomibao could have meant when he said that everyone, including gambling lords, had cooperated to stop jueteng, Reyes's Secretary Raul Gonzalez said the PNP chief might have been referring to the fact that "nothing bloody happened" in the course of the crackdown campaign.

"When there is a strong campaign, these people (referring to the line) because they don't want to run afoul of the law," he said of jueteng lords.

Gonzalez said the challenge now was how to sustain the campaign. He said it would also help if some jueteng lords were nabbed.

Lomibao announcing submitted to the DOJ a list of names of more than 50 "jueteng masterminds, financiers, capitalists."

He said 20 collectors and bettors had been arrested and the PNP was now "collecting evidence" to charge them in court. He also said the PNP would get them to testify against their bosses.

Gonzalez said the DOJ was building cases against those in the list and would task the PNP provincial director to testify in court.

"I'm quite certain that provincial commanders or chiefs of police have knowledge [of jueteng]. Even if they are not involved, they have information," he said.

He added that for now the DOJ had "no evidence that can stand in court."

Not moving around

Asked how jueteng operations were stopped without a single gambling lord arrested or intimidated, Reyes said: "Jueteng lords...the way I understand it, are not in the field conducting jueteng operations. Those who are in the field are the collectors (collectors) and the cabo (table managers), and [from] the instrument of the (operator) directors, there are no longer collectors moving around."

He said that as of yesterday, police could no longer catch collectors, bettors or supervisors because the numbers game had been stopped.

He admitted that the PNP did not have the power to suspend jueteng lords. He described as mere chaff, saying it would "perhaps be a violation of their human rights" if they were named without evidence.

But he insisted the assurance that Lomibao and the PNP were "determined" to go after jueteng and all forms of illegal gambling.

Still rampant

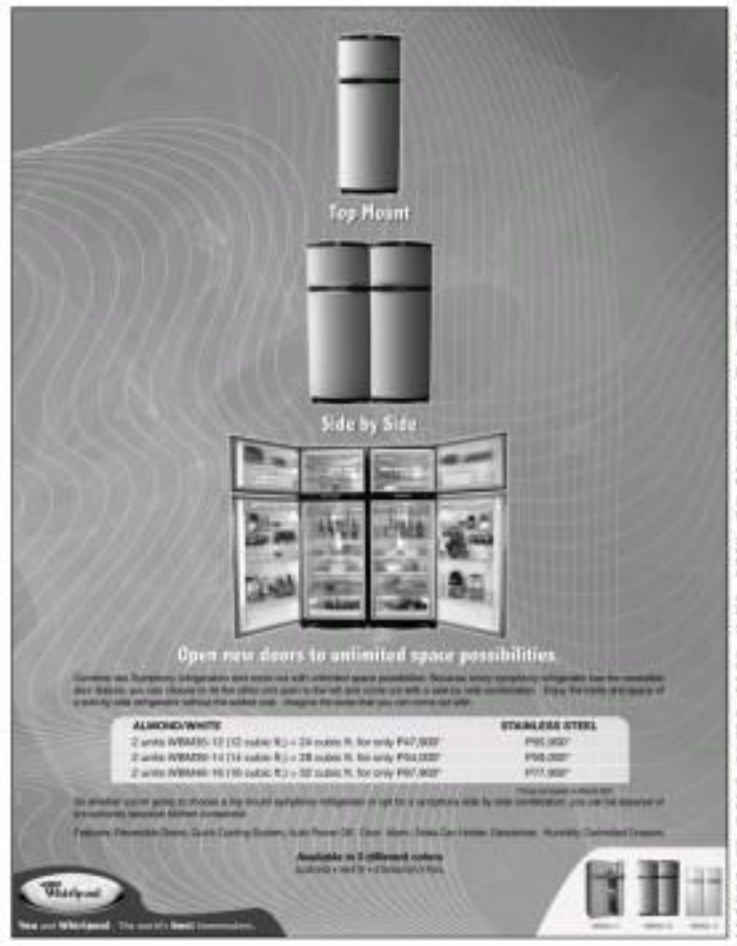
On Thursday, however, Lipa Archbishop Ramon Arguelles assailed the alleged attempt to lock jueteng operations in Batangas and appealed to the clergy of the province to exercise prudence and watchfulness.

"Nowadays when jueteng makes almost daily headlines, there are individuals and groups who approach priests to certify that Batangas is free of illegal gambling. The truth is that there have been no changes at all," Arguelles said.

To the parish priests who were reported to have signed the jueteng free certifications, Arguelles made this appeal: "Please refrain from making any false statement that Batangas is gambling-free."

Senior Supt. Florentino Ozo Montenegro said police had finished collecting all the certifications from barangay throughout 31 towns.

"Maybe the good archbishop is not yet aware that there are no more jueteng operations in Batangas. Since our monitoring operations on Monday, jueteng has stopped in every town and city," Montenegro said. *With reports from Jim Martin R. Gaitano, Jul U. Bacuno and Mel Magsino-Lobo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2013

SCIENCE/HEALTH

Editor Cesar D. Hangaway
Assistant Editor Benita D. Gonzales

When your arteries get clogged

By Charles E. Bolton

LOLA, a member of Filipinos 60 years and older, Conrad had trouble walking after an anxiety in his leg got clogged up with plaque. He frequently complained about a gnawing pain in his left calf while walking, forcing him to make a lot of rest stops.

The doctor told him he had a complete blockage in the leg. While viewing Conrad's X-ray, his doctor said, "You should see a dark line of the blood flow going all the way down, but because of the blockage, you don't see that."

Conrad can still consider himself fortunate because the cause of his circulatory was identified.

"Two-thirds of people with this condition, otherwise known as peripheral arterial sickness (PAD), do not have notable symptoms, which makes it particularly dangerous because a person with PAD is six times more likely to die from a heart attack or stroke compared to those without PAD," said Dr. Marcelino Dumaine.

Dumaine and Dr. Francisco Dalangin are leading an awareness campaign on atherosclerosis basis, the most common cause of PAD as well as heart attack and stroke.

Lifelong disease

"Atherosclerosis is a lifelong disease that affects the body's network of blood vessels," said Dumaine.

It occurs when a blood clot damages or begins to die in the side wall of an artery in the brain, brain or leg.

"This is dangerous because if the clot grows and blocks an artery, blood stops flowing and other tissues in search of oxygen and the nutrients it needs," said Dalangin.

He said that if blood flow is not restored in time, atherosclerosis can cost result in life threatening consequences, particularly damaging the brain, the heart and even the legs.

In many cases, the damage is so extensive that death can occur.

Prevention

"Research has shown that atherosclerosis starts in childhood, despite the fact that symptoms may not appear until a person is middle-aged or older," said Dumaine.

"It is only later in life that this condition manifests in the form of coronary artery disease, stroke, transient ischemic attack and PAD," said Dalangin.

The two doctors suggest that if an individual possess the risk factors for atherosclerosis, he should make an effort to have himself examined "before it's too late."

Dumaine said that although there are risk factors that cannot be changed (like age and gender), there are steps one can take to control or modify the risks of developing atherosclerosis. These include controlling high blood cholesterol level and high blood pressure, modifying eating habits, managing weight, refraining alcohol intake, quitting smoking, exercising and managing stress.

"Lifestyle changes such as losing weight, exercising, and reducing intake of fat and cholesterol can close or even slightly reverse the process of clogging arteries. There are those of the meantime, lifestyle changes one can make to reduce risk of atherosclerosis," said Dumaine.

Those who are at high risk for developing serious complications must be on a continuous daily medication of anticoagulant (blood thinning) drugs like aspirin and clopidogrel drugs (like clopidogrel) to prevent the development of harmful blood clots, he said.

Math Challenge

(Conclusion)

LAST WEEK we looked at sample questions and the winners of the 2013 Shredmath MTAP-Yoo Ed Math Challenge, now on to eighth year. The national finals for Grade Six and Fourth Year High School students were held at the Meralco Theater last April 27.

Oaks Ortiz-Patiño, president of Metrobank Foundation, reports, "We take pride that in this competition the awards are indeed substantive for it offers intangible and significant investment not only in the coaches and students, but to the larger community as well. With our elementary and high school students lagging behind in international surveys on math and science proficiencies, the Math Challenge is our humble and direct contribution in helping to create the interest and enhance mathematical skills of our youth.

"Some of those we could have done without our strong partnership with the Mathematics Institute (MI) of the Philippines (MIMP) and the Department of Education.

Significant strides

"Since 1997, our successful tripartite partnership has made significant strides in making the competition more attractive and beneficial for both the students and their coaches. In addition to our prize-winning almost half a million for different level winners, we have planes also received medals and trophies for their schools in recognition of the coaches' dedication, patience, and perseverance in harnessing the skills of our young mathematicians, they also received cash incentives during the regional and national finals, regardless of whether their medals were in the particular round or not.

"With these, we can truly say that our Math Challenge this year, while somewhat difficult, provided a rare opportunity for our young to become not only the best mathematicians our country will produce, but more importantly, better citizens who will lead the way in shaping a better generation of Filipinos."

High school winners

The gold medalists in the fourth year high school team competition were Sam Christian Lee, Jon Henri A. Ma (Ateneo de Manila University-Grade School, Quezon City), coached by Rosemarie Cabrera, and Irvin T. Chua were the top students in that series.

Actual problems

Why don't you try your hand at solving the actual problems posed by the competitors? In (1) seconds, answer each of the following questions:

• A book is to have 100 pages. How many times will the digit 2 be used in numbering the pages of the book? (Answer: 20)

• A certain number of students are to be accommodated in a bus (a). If two students share each room, then two students will be left without a room. If three students share each room, then two rooms will be left vacant. How many rooms are there? (Answer: Eleven)

• All the cops which fills on a buildings roof is enlisted in a rectangular tank with a cross section 1 meter by 1.5 meters. If 5 millimeters of rain falls on the flat roof, which has a total area of 2,000 square meters, then the level of water in the tank increases by how much? (Answer: 5 meters)

In 20 seconds, answer the following questions:

• Let ABCD be a square. Point P is inside the square such that ABP is an equilateral triangle. Find the measure of angle DPB. (Answer: 75 degrees)

• Find the value of x satisfy the [illegible] + (4x) - 7 = 0 and f(4) + f(-1) = 0 have the same slope. (Answer: x=-1/2)

• In right triangle ABC, altitude CD is drawn to the hypotenuse AB. If CD equals 12 cm and AD exceeds DB by 7, find AD. (Answer: 16 cm)

More problems

In one minute, solve the following problems:

• Convert quadrilateral ABCD into AB = AD = 25 cm, CD = CD = 52 cm, and DB = 40 cm. How many sq cm is ACD? (Answer: 504 sq cm)

• On triangle ABC, let D be on side AB and E on side AC such that DE is parallel to BC. If the area of triangle ABC is equal to the area of the trapezoid BDEC, what is the ratio of AD to AB? (Answer: 1 is to square root of 2:2.

• If Susan drives to work at x kilometers per hour, she will be one minute late. If she drives at y kilometers per hour, she will be one minute early. How far does she drive to work in terms of x and y? (Answer: xy/(x-y))

How men can prevent prostate cancer, diabetes

CHICAGO—Men should exercise vigorously at least three hours a week to stem potentially fatal cases of prostate cancer and extensive daily helpings of low-fat dairy foods to hold off diabetes, two studies said.

In one study, more than 19 years worth of data on nearly 46,000 men working in the health field, researchers found a 70 percent lower risk of advanced or fatal cases of prostate cancer among men aged 65 or older exercised vigorously at least three hours per week.

"Although the mechanisms still need to be understood, these findings suggest that vigorous activity could slow the progression of prostate cancer and might be recommended in earlier mortality from prostate cancer, particularly given the many other documented benefits of exercise," wrote Dr. Edward Giovannucci of the Harvard School of Public Health.

Participants—including nearly 3,000 who developed prostate cancer—were asked how much time they spent working or biking, running, bowling, lap swimming, rowing, playing tennis, squash or racquetball, or engaging in calisthenics.

Giovannucci said some previous studies have indicated a tenuous link between exercise and a lowered risk of prostate cancer, though the association was often not significant.

The study found no overall relationship between exercise and the disease except for a lowered risk of advanced and fatal cases of prostate cancer among men aged 65 or older who were in the highest category of physical activity. The association was not seen among younger men.

Skim milk better

The second study used data from the same survey of health workers to conclude that consumption of low-fat dairy products—especially skim milk—lowered men's risk of developing adult-onset diabetes.

Each added daily serving of low-fat dairy products was associated with a 9 percent lower risk for diabetes, the report said.

"In conclusion, dietary patterns characterized by higher dairy intake, especially low-fat dairy intake, may lower the risk of [adult onset] diabetes," wrote study author Dyon Choi of Massachusetts General Hospital in Charlestown.

Ingredients in dairy products may help the body use insulin to process blood sugar. Adult-onset diabetes results from the body's inability to use insulin or a decline in insulin production.

Both studies appeared in the month's Archives of Internal Medicine.

Reuters

Mangoes, other vitamin E-rich food may help protect vs Parkinson's

PARIS—Diets that are rich in vitamin E may help protect against Parkinson's, the neurodegenerative disease that afflicted Pope John Paul II, a study suggests.

People who had moderate to high amounts of vitamin E in their diets were less likely to develop Parkinson's, while vitamin C and beta carotene seemed to have almost no effect.

But pills and other supplements of vitamin E—as opposed to vitamin E that occurs naturally in food—may not have the protective effect, it says.

The paper is to be culled more analysis, as it examined only a handful of the that have been carried out into Parkinson's and nutrition. Its authors trawled through two big databases to find eight research projects in this area, spanning 1966 to March 2006.

Vegetable oil, nuts, fruits

People who had a pronounced intake of vitamin E in their diets were 15 percent less likely to develop Parkinson's.

Vitamin E is found in vegetable oils, nuts and fruits, especially those such as spinach and broccoli, as well as peanut butter and fruit such as kiwi and mangoes, according to the US National Institutes of Health website.

The study is published online by The Lancet Neurology, a specialist journal that is a spokesman of the British medical weekly The Lancet.

Its authors, led by Khalyar Etminan, of the Royal Victoria Hospital and McGill University in Montreal, Canada, say caution about drawing firm conclusions given that only a small number of studies into the impact of vitamin E on Parkinson's have been assessed.

They note that before doctors recommend any shift in diets, the results would have to be confirmed by a large trial to compare the outcome of matched people who have different levels of dietary vitamin E and are then monitored to see whether they develop the disease.

Loss of brain cells

Parkinson's is a currently incurable, degenerative disease of the nervous system, affecting more than one percent of people over 65. It occurs when there is a loss of cells in a part of the brain that produces dopamine, a neurotransmitter that communicates with other brain cells which regulate motor functions. Symptoms range from tremors and awkwardness and muscular stiffness to a distinctive shuffling gait.

The cause of the cell loss is unknown. The current speculation is that a number of factors—aging, genetic predisposition and environmental exposure—may be to blame.

Oxidative stress

One area of research is into oxidative stress: the tendency of rogue molecules called free radicals that are associated with cell damage. Vitamin E is a radical scavenger and may help to combat these dangerous agents.

The authors suggest that vitamin E may be more effective to eat orally or ensuring form rather than as a supplement because it is a slightly different molecule that is more "bioactive" than its synthetic counterpart.

As is why vitamin C—a highly powerful antioxidant—does not appear to combat the risk of the disease's, the authors suggest that the molecule may get filtered out by the kidneys in the brain, thus diminishing its "neuroprotective potential."

AFP

Breastfeeding best for healthy heart

PARIS—Children who are exclusively breastfed in infancy enjoy the equivalent benefits in cardiac health as those who exercise regularly and receive their safe intake, a study suggests.

The breath area spurred its research carried out in Denmark and Estonia into exercise 2,200 children aged 9 to 10 on identify risk factors for coronary heart disease.

Breastfeeding scored best on specific blood pressure—one of the two key indicators of cardiac well-being.

Children who were exclusively breastfed for six months had a much lower systolic reading than counterparts who had been partially breastfed or fed only infant formula. And the longer the child had been breastfed, the lower the score.

But breastfeeding had no apparent impact on levels of cholesterol or insulin resistance, a precursor to diabetes.

The study appears in the Archives of Disease in Childhood, a specialist British publication.

The lead author is Jennifer Lauder of the University of Kentucky Department of Social Medicine in studies in England.

AFP

Villafuerte dares accusers to take lie detector test

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By Armand N. Nocum

CABANATUAN: Sen Gov. Luis Raymund F. Villafuerte Jr. yesterday dared any involvement in "jueteng" and challenged his accusers, their supposed handler—Sen. Bong Revilla Jr.—and journalists to undergo a polygraph test to prove that they were telling the truth.

"I am not an operator, not a financier, not a banker, not cashier and not a payola receiver or paymaster," Villafuerte said.

This developed as the Department of Justice panel investigating jueteng said less than 15 provincial officials linked to jueteng would be the next ones to be invited by the Jueteng witness.

In a letter to Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., a copy of which was furnished Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Villafuerte offered to undergo the detector test to prove he was not involved in the illegal numbers racket before and after being elected governor in May 2004.

"I have never received, directly or indirectly, any payola that is related to jueteng. In fact, I have never been offered a bribe with monetary value, in cash or in kind," he said.

"I am willing to confront all these statements made under the cover of affidavit reduced to a polygraph test provided that the alleged 'whistleblower,' the senator who gathered the alleged information and the media writer to whom it has been released... should also submit themselves to the same polygraph test on questions that I will ask of them," he added.

Villafuerte was earlier named by a former jueteng bagman as among the local government officials operating jueteng in the province. The bagman claimed that Villafuerte was one of the jueteng operators giving P100.4 million a month to the police officials of Camp Crame.

The governor said it was just too fun that both the accusers and the accused should submit to the same litmus test to prove their claims.

Lizardo has earlier endorsed the National Bureau of Investigation to get Villafuerte's confidential bank records. But he was one of the local officials linked to the illegal numbers racket.

The DOJ formed a panel to investigate the jueteng issue upon orders of President Maria Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. At least three officials Arroyo have linked Ilocos Governor Mike Arroyo and Davao del Sur Rep. Mikey Arroyo to jueteng.

Villafuerte admitted that jueteng exists in his province, but said these were "sporadic" or "guerrilla operations."

Reacting to Villafuerte's letter, Revilla said that the polygraph test "is an aide, but not admissible to evidence in court."

Asked if they were going to grant Villafuerte's wish, Gonzalez replied: "We'll see."

Church tries new tack vs 'jueteng'

WHEN the usual tactics and lures to "jueteng"...

The Catholic Church is trying a new tack in its crusade against the multibillion-peso illegal numbers game by urging customers, not collectors, the poor who are the game's base, to stop.

"The people should own and be all step already themselves to be fooled," said Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales.

Rosales said bettors should realize that jueteng was nothing but "organized victimization" because it squeezes them while betting millions of pesos only to gambling operators and their protectors and beneficiaries.

"Once in a while, bettors are allowed to win, but not all know that the result is fixed," he said.

"How much is the pot? P100,000 or P500,000? And how much is the profit for paying [only] Million?" the prelate said.

He pointed out the illegal numbers game, however, unwittingly help finance the election campaign of an unscrupulous politician or supporter in corrupt politicians's second family, the prelate said.

"Of course, if you are the politician receiving P50,000 monthly in jueteng payola, what would stop you having an extra family? A second or third wife?" he asked.

"It's really evil," Rosales said.

A conservative jueteng payola distributor for the Luguerio Empire, Archbishop Oscar Cruz goes to the Department of Justice always to help Philippine Amusement Police Officials receives at least P195.6 million a month in jueteng payoffs. — Christian V. Esguerra

VAT law challenged at SC

From page A1

the President with a constitutional power to raise taxes... VAT is one."

"Under the Constitution, the President has the power to adjust tariff rates. There's a reason for that because goods from all over the world enter our country due to this... But not tax."

Constitutional infirmity

Pimentel pointed out that even the two conditions under which this power could be granted could not ejer the "constitutional infirmity." The President is authorized to raise the VAT rate if the VAT tax effort exceeds 2.8 percent of gross domestic product or if the national government deficit exceeds 1.5 percent of GDP.

"You can put a thousand conditionalities, still the same grant of this power will be constitutionally infirm," he said.

The measure, part of a tax reform package designed to head off a fiscal crisis, is expected to generate at least P200.75 billion in additional revenues this year and P404.2 billion in full implementation next year.

The bill also lifts the exemptions enjoyed by the power, petroleum and other sectors, and raises the corporate income tax from 32 to 35 percent.

Strengthening minority bloc

The petition, Pimentel said, is part of the bloc's efforts "at strengthening ourselves" in the wake of its move to oust Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile from the powerful Commission on Ap-

PIMENTEL

pointments.

"We're going to file a petition to question the VAT and what will probably indicate to you who are considered to be the legitimate representatives of the minority at the opposition," the senator said.

The tiff within the opposition came to light last Tuesday when Pimentel announced on the Senate floor that he and the six other senators in the bloc had agreed to strip Enrile from the CA. They accused Enrile of "betraying" for some Malacañang appointees at the CA hearings. — With a report from Norman Bordadora, Phil Pinpin Ramos

Bandera launched as RP's 1st compact newspaper

From page B1

"The revitalized Bandera will be a complete reading experience for the family. It has the handy size and price of small newspapers," said Ellen Mangubat, publisher of Hi's three newspapers.

The new Bandera is targeting the C and D market, particularly in Metro Manila. But separate editions are tailored for other markets outside the capital.

Mangubat said the paper's decision to switch to a tabloid size from tabloids have no slide out ads and violence on their page in order to succeed.

"With Bandera, we believe it's a matter of putting quality newsprint in a reader-friendly size," she said.

Bandera here as many time browsing through small-format compacts, whether they are in Luzon, commuting or on the work place.

The 14-year-old Bandera join the list tabloid turn tabloids or broadsheets, a broadsheet competitors have started. It is also the only small paper with a daily business section. Bandera is acknowledged as the number one national tabloid in Manila and the Visayas.

Editor-in-chief of the new Bandera is Belinda Largo Ocho, former managing editor of Philippine Journal. Philippine News, and Manila Standard before that. Before she had a long by-line in Business World.

The relaunched version will initially have 36 pages in full color and circulated in Luzon and the Visayas. The Mindanao edition will come in reduced size for the time being.

The first issue of the new Bandera hits the streets on May 24, the first day of Flag Day leading to the celebration of Independence Day on June 12, to mirror its company for 80 years of history.

Bandera is the second newspaper of PI to adopt the compact format. The first was Cebu Daily News, which uses compact such as it turn to 11-inch format in September last year.

"Switching to tabloid has allowed to compact is a global trend," said Alex Reyes, PI senior vice president, noting that respected publications such as the Financial Times of London and the San Francisco Examiner have made the switch to the compact format.

Last week, the Wall Street Journal announced that it, too, would go compact by September this year.

PI's third newspaper is Tempo, one of the fastest growing tabloids in the country.

RP population to hit 85.2M this year

By Christian V. Esguerra

MANILA—The Philippine population is expected to balloon to 85.2 million this year, said the Commission on Population, citing projections from the National Demographic and Health Survey.

The projection is based mainly on the current 2.36-percent annual population growth rate, according to Tomas Ocier, the commission's executive director.

Unless the rate is slowed down, 5,000 more Filipinos would be born in 24 hours; 8.4 million in three years, and 12.5 in six years, he said, citing NDHS estimates.

Ocier called on the government to further promote family planning all over the country.

"Seventeen percent of women would like to plan their pregnancy but do not have the means to do so because of the lack of access to family planning services," he said. "That is also the reason why one in three births occur within two years of the previous birth."

The Arroyo administration's main family planning program, "Ligtas Buntis" of the Department of Health, is on hold following an aggrieved relationship in February.

The program came under fire from the Catholic Church for promoting artificial birth control methods such as the use of pills, condoms and even the controversial intrauterine device (IUD).

Outgoing Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit, who is set to step down on May 31, had admitted he personally preferred natural methods.

His successor, Dr. Francisco Duque III of the Philippine Health Insurance Corp, said he would first conduct consultation meetings with Church groups, natural family planning advocates, and health workers before deciding on the fate of Ligtas Buntis.

In the meantime, he suggested that it be renamed "Ligtas na Pagbubuntis" to appease critics who insist that the present title degrades the value pregnancy or the level of disease.

Despite oil price rollback, basic goods unchanged

By Abigail L. Ho

WHILE oil firms have started rocking prices of their products to reflect the softening of world oil prices, the prices of basic necessities and prime commodities will most likely remain unchanged.

Trade Assistant Secretary Norman Mercon explained that oil price surges during the first few months of the year did not have much of an impact on commodity prices. Likewise, the recent price cutbacks would not lead to a decrease in prices of basic goods.

"According to our study, fuel costs account for a minor share in the total production cost of most manufactured and processed commodities. It [varies] from industry to industry, but typically it's about 2 to 3 percent," Mercon said in a statement.

Despite this, he added that the recent local oil price rollbacks would give much needed relief to heavily burdened manufacturers that use fuel in their operations.

"Thus, we should not expect any price increase on basic goods attributed to fuel costs [in the near future]," he said.

Based on the Department of Trade and Industry's monitoring, retail prices of basic goods such as canned food, instant noodles, processed milk, coffee refills, condiments, soaps and detergents generally remained stable these past months.

Local flour prices have even been on a downward trend these past two months, with hard flour now retailing at P600 per 25-kg bag from P625 in February.

Hard flour is used to make pan de sal.

Prices of soft flour, likewise had gone down by P25 per bag during the same period.

The DTI attributed the drop in flour prices to declining international wheat prices, as well as to a decrease in demand for bread and bakery products.

As world oil prices continue to decline, oil firms, a few days ago, slashed gasoline prices by 50 to 55 centavos a liter and diesel and kerosene prices by 30 to 35 centavos a liter.

This latest price rollback is the third in a month for gasoline products, placing the total price reduction at P2.25 a liter. This is the first rollback for diesel after nine successive increases since the start of the year.

Premium unleaded gasoline now retails between P38.70 and P39.67 a liter, diesel sells between P28.15 and P27.50 a liter, while kerosene retails between P27.70 and P28.50 a liter.

Since the start of the year, gasoline prices have gone up eight times or by a total P4.35 a liter, while prices of diesel fuel have increased nine times or by a total P4.55 a liter.

6 killed in 2 Quezon road accidents

LUCENA CITY—Six persons, including an infant, were killed in two separate vehicular accidents in Quezon province yesterday morning, police report said.

Chief Insp. Roger Pereira, Pagbilao police chief, said that at around 6 a.m., a Toyota Corolla with Plate No. NLN-770 and heading toward Rizal, collided with a 10-wheeler truck in a sharp curve along Maharlika Highway in Barangay Malicboy, Pagbilao.

Sharp curve

He identified the fatalities as Ranell Lacson, a resident of Legazpi City and driver of the Toyota car. Also killed were his passengers Luis de la Rosa, of San Isidro, Oriental Mindoro; Joey Dolfo, 22, of Poblacion, Iriga, Camarines Sur and Niels Ramirez, an 8-month-old boy.

A report said the car was negotiating a sharp curve, when it occupied the opposite lane causing it to slam into the oncoming truck bearing Plate No. TPR-528 and driven by one Lucas Dimayuga.

The victims were rushed to the Jane Cotoy Hospital in Pagbilao but were all declared dead on arrival.

Another car passenger, Dulcete de la Rosa, was treated in the same hospital.

The truck driver has been detained at the Pagbilao municipal jail.

Motorcycle riders

In Barangay Gulang-Gulang here, two motorcycle riders were killed on the spot after their vehicle hit a truck at around 9 a.m.

Police report identified the victims as Jason Asuncion, 30, resident of Barangay Ilaya, this city and his backrider, Mariano Tilanka, 43.

Investigators said the two overtook a vehicle in a sharp curve in front of the second gate of the military's Southern Luzon Command headquarters when it hit the left side of the oncoming 10-wheeler truck.

The motorcycle rammed the left side rear wheel of the truck and almost crushed the victim's bodies. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon bureau*

The WORLD

Editor Lorenne B. Greco

Suicide bomb attack at Pakistan Muslim shrine kills 18 worshippers

ISLAMABAD—A suicide bomber blew himself up in the middle of a crowd of mainly Shiite Muslim worshippers at a Pakistani shrine Friday, killing at least 18 people and injuring dozens, officials and witnesses said.

Hundreds of pilgrims were attending an annual religious celebration at the Bari Imam shrine in the village of Sarpaj, just north of the capital Islamabad, when the blast occurred, witnesses said.

The majority of the people marking the anniversary of 17th-century Muslim saint's death were members of Pakistan's minority Shiite community, witnesses said. In previous days the worshippers have been mainly Sunnis.

"There were pools of blood everywhere and the bomb scattered body parts inside and outside the shrine. It was a very gut-wrenching scene," witness Mohammad Amjad said.

Police found a decapitated head lying on the floor of the shrine while pools many feet a dead body and said a suicide bomber may have carried out the attack.

"It was definitely a suicide bomb of the armored civic management cell Brig. Javed Cheema said.

Many other people are injured. We are trying to normalize the situation," added traffic police officer Hamid Shah.

Police cordoned off the scene after the explosion at about 11:20 a.m. while emergency services worked at the scene and ambulances ferried the dead and injured to hospital, witnesses said.

"The congregation was in progress, around 600 people were there, when a man walked in and stunned toward the stage where a Shiite leader was delivering a sermon," witnesses Amjad said.

"When the man got close to the stage there was a big explosion and I have seen pieces of people's

Television footage showed worshippers in traditional Pakistani clothing wailing and beating themselves amid scenes of chaos after the blast.

Thousands of minority Shiite and moderate Sunni Muslims have been killed in Pakistan in sectarian violence through bomb blasts, suicide bombing and by targeted killings in recent years.

The latest casualties of the shrine and two other people were shot dead near the compound in February. Early this month police said they had killed the suspects in three coordinated explosions at Shiite

Both sects claim the shrine is theirs but it has been controlled by Sunnis for the past two decades. Shiites make up about 20 percent of Pakistan's 150 million predominantly Muslim population.

The shrine, in the village of Sarpaj just north of Islamabad, is dedicated to Sufi Muslim saint Shah Abdul Latif Kazmi, known as the Lenin, who helped bring Islam to the region.

Each year in May thousands of worshippers gather at the shrine.

In March, 39 Sunni and Shiite devotees died in a blast at another Sufi shrine in the remote southwestern town of Hub.

A group of senior Pakistani Muslim clerics this month declared suicide bombings and attacks on ordinary citizens and places of worship are un-Islamic.

Last year was one of the bloodiest yet amid ongoing sectarian tension in Pakistan, with at least 160 people dying in a series of 10 bomb attacks.

Police said this month they had arrested two Islamic militants from a banned Sunni Islamic group including a suspected would-be suicide bomber involved in a plot to attack a religious rally last year. AFP

VIDEO grab shows a man reacting at the site of a suicide bombing in Islamabad May 27. The blast occurred at the Bari Imam shrine, which is close to Pakistan's state government buildings and the diplomatic enclave, where many embassies and diplomatic residences are located. AFP/PTV

Bird flu kills over 1,000 migratory birds in China

BEIJING—A strain of bird flu deadly to humans has killed more than 1,000 migratory birds in northwest China, an agriculture ministry official said on Friday, more than five times the number of birds initially reported dead.

Earlier this week, China warned of serious concerns and united more than 7 million doses of bird flu vaccine to northern Qinghai province after migratory birds were found dead from the H5N1 strain.

"Now we have been doing is preventing domestic fowl and people from having contact with wild migratory birds," Jia Youling, director general of the veterinary bureau of the agriculture ministry, told a news conference.

None of the 1.16 million domestic birds in the province had been found to be infected, he said. He dismissed rumors any humans had been infected.

Poultry in Qinghai and the far western regions of Xinjiang and Tibet have been the targets of a compulsory vaccination campaign in an effort to control the disease and prevent it from spreading to domestic fowl or to humans.

China successfully rushed an outbreak to the same region last year, banning about 140,000 culled birds.

Local experts said there was still a chance domestic poultry could be at risk, since they often share water and feeding sources with wild birds. Reuters

Chirac makes dramatic last-ditch plea for a French 'yes' for EU charter

PARIS—President Jacques Chirac concluded with a final call—"Long live Europe and long live France," he said. Then, he turned the destinies of the voters and the constitution over to their hands.

Their choice today: a simple "oui" or "non" to a constitution that is pictured as Europe's most big-step in a 50-year process of bringing together nations and peoples who fought centuries of wars.

With his hopes for Europe and a considerable chunk of presidential prestige on the line, Chirac spent the last day of a televised last-ditch address aimed at stirring off the seeming increasingly likely defeat of the French will vote the final South European treaty down's.

"On Sunday, each of us will have a part of France's destiny in their hands," he said.

"What a responsibility. If France, a founder nation of European, took the risk of breaking the unions it can contribute."

By honoring French voting power in European Union decisions, the treaty will help France "defend its interests and extends one of the matters of Europe," he said.

But a French rejection would be regarded by other Europeans as "a no to Europe."

"It would open a period of distrust, of doubts, of uncertainties," he warned in the address from the presidential Elysee Palace, his last of a tumultuous campaign.

Chirac urged the French not to turn the referendum into a vote of confidence in his government, but he did not address speculation that he will flee the unpopular prime minister if the outcome is "no."

"We must not mistake the question," said Chirac. "It is not about saying yes or no to the government. It is about your future, that of your children, that of the future of France and the future of Europe." AP

New famine that may kill millions feared as food crisis grips N. Korea

SEOUL—A food crisis on the scale of the mid-'90s famine that is blamed for the deaths of millions in North Korea could occur again unless urgent action is taken, a UN humanitarian group said last Friday.

"Earlier and gentleman, there is a food crisis in North Korea and that food crisis is getting worse by the week and by the day," Tony Banbury the World Food Programme (WFP) Asia director, told a press conference.

"I don't want to be overly alarmist and certainly I am not. But I fear that in the current circumstances we may well be headed toward a very serious crisis ... we could be back in a situation on a level that existed in the mid-'90s. It's possible."

The WFP had almost exhausted its entire stock of food destined to keep 6.3 million North Koreans, nearly a third of the population, from starvation, Banbury said by August five million of them would be without food aid.

He said the WFP needed 304,000 tons to meet the needs of North Korea's most vulnerable people: the elderly, children, pregnant women and nursing mothers. Currently there were 167,000 tons on hand.

Last week the United States, a key donor along with the European Union and South Korea, said it was in talks with the WFP about food aid and had until the end of the year to make a decision about North Korea.

But Banbury said that would be too late for millions of North Koreans who have run out.

"We cannot wait, and most importantly, 6.5 million North Koreans cannot wait until the end of the year to receive additional assistance."

The United States has continued to provide food aid to North Korea despite the nuclear standoff sharing both in October 2002, sending humanitarian aid valued at $74.5 million this year.

However, Washington reduced its contribution by half from the previous year to 50,000 tons in 2004 and has expressed fears some aid is being diverted to North Korea's military.

Last year North Korea announced new restrictions on monitoring of food distribution by foreign agencies.

But Banbury said the WFP had seen no evidence, despite thousands of monitoring visits, during back in 1998, of any diversion.

He said North Korea's elite, the military, pro-class citizens of all else have food produced in North Korea and neither wants nor needs international assistance, no matter that the WFP offers to the destitute.

"My producer for instance a lot of your ideas are still liked. In an urban life you're basically a don't believe soldiers are raising baby food. It just doesn't make intuitive sense. Banbury said. AFP

NORTH Korean children eat fortified biscuits provided by the United Nations World Food Program at a primary school in Wonchon-county, Kangwon province in this April 27 photo. AP

Iraq rebels down US chopper; 2 GIs die

BAGHDAD... Two US soldiers were killed when insurgents shot down their helicopter, the military said Friday, as the Iraqi government sealed off Baghdad in a bid to quell mounting attacks on the capital.

Meanwhile, speculation continued over the fate of al-Qaida's ringleader in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, reported to have been badly wounded and the focus of a spate of conflicting Internet claims.

The dead US soldiers were flying to one of two helicopters attacked by insurgents' gunfire which crashed as they were carrying out a support mission for coalition troops near the rebel stronghold of Haqlaniya late Thursday.

The second chopper managed to land at a US air base after sustaining damage, it said, with US forces mounting the area around the crash site.

With car bombs exploding almost daily in the capital, the government has imposed a vast operation to seal off Baghdad using tens of thousands of Iraqi police and soldiers and setting up hundreds of extra checkpoints.

"We're going to set up a security cordon around Baghdad... and it will be impossible for terrorists to cross," said Defense Minister Sadoun al-Dulaimi, adding that the plan would soon be extended to the provinces.

"The objective is to turn from a defensive position to an offensive one and to put the capacities of civilians and interior ministry forces in the lead."

In the northwest, around 1,000 US and Iraqi troops continued their operation to flush Iraq's insurgents from the town of Haditha in a bid to root insurgents loyal to Zarqawi who fled en masse for operations near the Syrian border.

Zarqawi was reported wounded last week with a bullet wound between his shoulder and his chest, according to unverifiable statements on Internet websites, though confusion remained over whether a deputy had already been appointed in his place.

Ten suspected militants, including a Muslim cleric, have been killed in fighting in the US military said, with one shot dead on Thursday.

"We were able to achieve what we believe is total surprise, and we continue to do our arms of coordinated searches for insurgents and for caches of munitions and weapons," said Col. Stephen Davis, in charge of the American end of the operation.

The operation in Haditha, some 120 km from the Syrian border, comes after a week-long sweep earlier this month around al-Qaim, west on the Euphrates, in which at least 200 insurgents and nine US troops were killed.

But the operations set on the main road from Damascus to Baghdad, which US and Iraqi authorities believe is the main thoroughfare for insurgents they say are entering from Syria, in charges coordinated by Damascus.

Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari said last week that Baghdad needed bilateral talks with Damascus soon to demand action against insurgents infiltrating the border, but on Thursday added that a number of problems need to be resolved before such a meeting could take place.

With Damascus and Baghdad continuing to seek an amicable solution to the alleged infiltrations, the US military was reportedly pressing for a buffer zone to be set up along the border in order to stem the flow of militants.

The 10-km wide security zone is just one of several options put forward by the US military to "deal with hot-air" alleged involvement in Iraq, the Al-Hayat daily said, quoting "informed, diplomatic sources." AFP

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PHARMACOR GENERICS

B.A.S.I.C.

Bali court sentences Aussie beauty therapist 20 years for pot smuggle

BALI, Indonesia – An Indonesian court sentenced a young Australian beauty therapist to 20 years in jail on Friday for smuggling marijuana into the holiday island of Bali in a verdict that could put a strain on ties.

Lawyers for Schapelle Corby, 27, said they would appeal the ruling, which triggered outrage from her family. Australian editors in the two nations in the country urged an end to aid to the world's most populous Muslim nation.

The panel of judges declared the defendant legally and convincingly guilty of the crime of illegal importation of narcotics," chief judge Linton Sitorus told a hearing that was watched live in Australia.

As soon as Sitorus read the verdict, Corby's mother, Rosleigh Sloan, shouted at the three judges on the panel: "Liar, liar. Honey, we are going to take you home." Wearing pink sweatsuit and a black blouse, an emotional Corby turned to her mother and pleaded with her to calm down.

"Mum, stop, it's okay," she cried.

Breaking for the verdict, Corby kept mouthing the word "20" in Indonesian, clearly stunned by the sentence.

Prosecutors had demanded life in jail for Corby, who has argued the 4.1 kg of drugs found by Bali airport officials in her surfboard bag have never been planted.

The trial has gripped Australia, which has enjoyed a period of warm relations with Indonesia after two years of rocky ties.

Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said he did not believe the case would damage ties.

But public sentiment in Australia is behind Corby, with newspaper polls showing 90 percent of Australians believe she was innocent. Her plight has triggered clearly directed against Indonesian dependence on Australia.

"An enormous amount of abuse directed to Indonesia and public criticism of Indonesia is not going to help, in the end of the day it is much more likely to be counterproductive than productive," Downer told reporters.

Corby's lawyers have insisted many people could have put the drugs into her bodyboard bag along the way from Brisbane, their where she flew, to Bali, repeatedly because it was not locked.

She changed planes in Sydney and her defense team has said she was the victim of a drug-ring revenge operation from Brisbane to Sydney. For some reason, the drugs were not removed from her bag in Sydney, the defense has said. Reuters

CORBY shouting as her family after she was found guilty of marijuana into Bali last year

Australians furious at s

SYDNEY – Many Australians reacted with shock and anger on Friday after an Indonesian court sentenced a young Australian beauty therapist to 20 years in jail for smuggling marijuana into the resort island of Bali.

Hot since Lindy Chamberlain's cried over claims that a dingo killed her baby Azaria in the Australian outback in the 1980s has a real gripped moviegoers like Schapelle Corby's.

Corby was arrested last October after Indonesian customs found 4.1 kg of marijuana in her bodyboard bag when she arrived at Bali. She says she does not know who put the drugs in her bag, suggesting sweeps customs officers baggage handlers.

Shopping centers and hotel televisions across Australia broadcast the verdict live, attracting crowds of lunchtime workers who watched in disbelief when Corby was given 20 years.

Many callers to radio talk shows were incensed, and some said they regretted making donations to Indonesian tsunami victims. Others called for tourists to boycott Bali.

Sydney 2GB radio announcer Chris Smith said Corby's 20-year sentence was "fraud and insulting," adding he was horrified by reports that the prosecution would appeal for a longer jail term.

"It appeared awfully barbaric from what I could see and hear," said Smith, adding that he had felt "sick in the stomach" watching the live TV broadcast of the sentencing.

Former Liberal politician Pauline Hanson called on Australians to shun Indonesia. "I'd say to Australians don't go near the place, keep away from it, boycott it," she said.

"I may be from who are in Schapelle Corby's shoes were this accused," said Hanson, who was branded xenophobia when she called for a cut in Asian immigration. Her say is the economic backbone of Bali, which is a popular destination for Australians.

Prime Minister John Howard said he understood why Australians felt so deeply about the Corby case. "The fact that we are a close, almost young neighborhood, it can cause that has touched this country very directly," he said.

A number of radio callers questioned Corby's 20-year jail term compared with lesser sentences for Indonesians convicted of involvement in the bombing of two Bali nightclubs in 2002 which

Burma op marks 15 of stolen

RANGOON – Burma's opp Democracy (NLD) marks a years after its terror inaugu its leader sang has free Bal

The Nobel laureate and h under house arrest since a apparent lover threatened by ground rallies have been shu its dilapidated Rangoon he the regime's ever-watchful e

The party won 392 of 48 elections, considered free a community, but the junta fo to take office.

"Eighty-two percent of th the NLD... but the NLD coul tive, obligated to the voters," about 800 NLD members are repr diplomats who got here

U Lwin offered no direct brief speech, speaking norm keep [illegible] their hearts

Last year in a similar gath protests to require the USW head to do so had "shunned" t

The junta has dumped its its semi-arrest since "road ma liners when an Air Sun have c forms demanded by the inte

The junta has spoiled many road map, but adjourned the h suspended the meetings indefi

The talks were lacquered opposition party and doctr have. The result has been a p ny's economy crumbles.

"The NLD is like a sweet tre ers," one political analyst said a

Boycotting the consultation Convention has left the pa begin with the government.

"Instead of claiming a vic reconciliation then close ne opposition," he said.

Guantanamo probe finds 5 Koran abuse cases

WASHINGTON—The US military has identified five incidents of "mishandling of a Koran" by US personnel at Guantanamo Bay, but found no credible evidence that the Muslim holy book had been flushed down a toilet, the commander of the prison said on Thursday.

Brig. Gen. Jay Hood refused to specify the nature of the mishandling of the Koran at the prison for foreign terrorism suspects at the US naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, other than to say it did not involve placing it in a toilet.

An FBI agent quoted a detainee in an August 2002 document made public on Wednesday as saying guards had thrown a Koran in a toilet. Hood said military investigators interviewed that man this month, but did not directly ask him whether he had seen US personnel put a Koran in a toilet.

But Hood told a Pentagon briefing: "I'd like you to know that we have found no credible evidence that a member of the Joint Task Force at Guantanamo Bay ever flushed a Koran down a toilet."

Hood said two US Guantanamo staffers had been disciplined. One was transferred to other duties, Hood said. He did not describe the other case.

Owing preliminary findings of a 15-day-old military inquiry into statements at the Kabul and Guantanamo, Hood said investigators turned up 11 allegations of mishandling the Koran, with five confirmed cases of "what could be broadly defined as mishandling of a Koran."

Four US guards and one interrogator were involved in the cases, three of which appeared to be deliberate mishandling and two accidental, Hood said.

Four of the five cases took place before written guidelines were issued in January 2003 on handling the Koran at Guantanamo, Hood said.

Hood also said US military investigators this month interviewed the detainee quoted in the August 2002 document.

Hood said the detainee did not mention during the May 14 interview that US personnel had placed a Koran in a toilet.

"The guards in the detention facility do not treat him well. Their behavior is bad. About five months ago, the guards beat the detainees. They flushed a Koran in the toilet," the FBI agent wrote, summarizing the detainee's comments.

Hood said the detainee, who US officials have not identified, said in the May 14 interview he had not been beaten or abused but that he had heard rumors that other detainees had been.

"We then proceeded to ask him about any incident where he had seen the Koran defiled, desecrated or mishandled, and he allowed as how he hadn't, but he heard that guards at some other point and time had done this," Hood said.

But Hood said investigators did not directly ask the detainee about a Koran being placed in a toilet. "I do not believe they (and) that word either," he said.

FBI documents also contained accounts of detainees telling FBI agents that US personnel at Guantanamo kicked the Koran or threw it to the floor and beat prisoners.

The issue of whether the Koran had been thrown in a toilet at Guantanamo has generated controversy globally in recent weeks.

The Bush administration denounced as wrong a May 9 Newsweek article, later retracted by the magazine, that stated US interrogators at Guantanamo had flushed a Koran down a toilet to try to make detainees talk. Violent protests erupted in some Muslim countries following the article's publication and at least 16 people died in rioting in Afghanistan.

The United States now holds about 520 detainees at Guantanamo, a high-security prison opened in January 2002 for non-US citizens caught in the US war on terrorism.

Eight allegations of mishandling the Koran were not confirmed, Hood said. These involved six in which guards either accidentally touched it within the scope of their duties or did not touch the book at all, he said. Two additional incidents involved interrogators who either touched or stood over a Koran, Hood said. *Reuters*

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...g a banner "Free Schapelle."
...don't think she is guilty and
...didn't have to rot away in an
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...newspaper polls show 90 per-
...of Australians believe Corby
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

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Blood debts

EDITORIAL

THE CASE of Brig. Gen. Jovito Palparan, commander of the 8th Infantry Division based in Catbalogan, Samar, and, according to rights advocates, party-list representatives and bereaved families, responsible for warrantless arrests and searches as well as for killings and disappearances in Eastern Visayas, demands more attention than is being given. That he has been assured of important posts despite a consistently questionable record in human rights violations; that Malacañang has endorsed his promotions to higher rank indicates that the administration does not put much weight on unanswered questions.

There has to be a reason why the man has been termed "Executioner of Samar" or, before then, "Butcher of Mindoro." Surely, these tags do not just spring from thin air. What is clear is that rights advocates and party-list representatives have filed administrative and criminal charges against him for alleged human rights violations committed when he was commander of the 204th Infantry Brigade in Mindoro Oriental. His term there from 2002 to 2004 was marked by the unsolved killing of a number of activists, including Eddie Gumanoy and Eden Marcellana and human rights lawyer Jory Magsino, who was also a vice mayor of the town of Naujan, and her associate Lenina Porta. (Bayan Muna Rep. Teddy Casiño also said that during Palparan's term, Mindoro became "a laboratory for new counterinsurgency tactics where civilians were recently afflicted.")

Despite this, he was promoted from brigadier general to his present rank, for which he is awaiting confirmation by the Commission on Appointments.

Prime accusers, Eastern Visayas, the seventh poorest region nationwide, has now become Palparan's "theater." He took on the command of the 8th ID in February and has since added for about 300 more troops to complement the 6,000 soldiers and militiamen in the region. Early in May, he said the Inquirer, "If we have more troops, the enemies would just collapse even without fighting. The more troops we have, the easier for us to solve the insurgency problem..." A little more than a week later, hundreds of frightened residents of upland villages in Calbiga, Samar, were forced to flee their homes because of "special operations" of armed men believed to be members of the military.

Palparan has been frank in stating his mission: to wipe out the communist insurgency in Eastern Visayas within six months to a year. (The attentive observer would be moved to recall the French general, Jacques Massu, who was sent to Algeria during its war of independence from France. He employed harsh measures, including the use of concentration camps for nearly two million Algerians. In 1957, Massu and the French government embarked on a counterinsurgency campaign in Algiers using torture. Within seven months—from March to mid-October—he smashed the Algerian resistance.) But at least two Western Samar lawmakers, Rep. Reynaldo Uy and Rep. Camilo Figueras, are on record as saying that since Palparan became 8th ID commander, the human rights situation in the province had taken a turn for the worse. They told a hearing at the House on Wednesday of the disappearance of civilians, of armed men raiding civilians' homes in the dead of night. Uy also said he feared for his life because Palparan had accused him and Figueras of being supporters of the communist New People's Army.)

On Tuesday at a hearing of the Commission on Appointments, Alex Lagumbal of the rights group Karapatan Sisi-tranger Bisayas was specific: 399 cases of killing, frustrated killing, disappearance, harassment, torture, physical assault, arbitrary arrest and detention of civilians, rights advocates and party-list lawmakers have been recorded since the general's assignment.

All these—all of Palparan's "unpaid blood debts to farmers and the struggling masses as a whole," according to the farmers' group Saguisag-Eastern Visayas—should give the Commission on Appointments pause as it deliberates on Palparan's confirmation. The man may have emphasized the absence of proof of his personal participation in the cases cited by the two Western Samar lawmakers, but Figueras was correct to say that command responsibility was what should apply.

And it goes without saying that in any case, whether it involves jaslang or the murder of a human rights lawyer in some deserted highway—the absence of proof does not automatically mean innocence.

The quality of our present leaders

SEPARATE OPINION

Ingguit A. Cruz

A LETTER to the editor appears with my column of May 15 (where I deplored the conduct of some Filipinos who did not rise when our national anthem was being played. The writer, who firmly stated himself as Bush, left, however. But I had not said enough. He believed that I should have rallied on our leaders to do something about this gross disrespect for our "Lupang Hinirang" as a symbol of the highest ideals of the Republic of the Philippines.

For the information of my naïve friend, the omission was intentional. The reason was obvious. I did not call on our leaders because it was needless and useless. The reason was also obvious. Unlike the departed Bush, I no longer believe in the civic spirit of our leaders as I used to believe. I did not expect that calling on them to do something about this serious moral and civic issue would have received anything but an indifferent reaction.

The present leadership in our government is tarnished and unreliable. Some officials are presumably even criminal. Most of them are ill-prepared for public service, both intellectually and morally. They are there not by virtue of their personal qualifications but by such questionable considerations as wealth, power, family relations, religious culture, political connections and other dubious recommendations. Intelligence, integrity, and love of country are dispensable requirements, often even mocked as inconvenient vices in the discharge of official duties.

Malacañang itself, which should be extolled as the haven of virtue is derided and dishonored. The First Family is now targeted for alleged election irregularities, involvement in various corruption scandals, and inappropriate executive privileges of presidential waiver to appointees. Even as a reward for previous political support. The President, with her husband and their son, has been accused as a special protector of jueteng, which is widespread in her own hometown of Lubao, Pampanga. Her Excellency has become for her an undeserved title.

The Cabinet is no less suspicious. Several resignations have added to its loss of public confidence. A number has accused one member of improper conduct in the opening of some natural resources. Another member has been bypassed by the Commission on Appointments because of questions about his integrity that the President has not seen fit to investigate despite their seriousness. In fact, it is apparent that he will be reappointed following his next expected be pass to another presidential slight of the Commission on Appointments.

Congress has its share of public disappointments, and a big share it is. The park barrel continues to exist it despite its lip-service pronouncements of its honesty and devotion to the public welfare. Save for a few notable exceptions, its membership is flawed and underqualified if not also dishonest. The record of such essentials of criminals as Bureau Jalosjos and Mark Jimenez continues to blemish it. It has rejected the efforts of the courts to prosecutorily suspend some of its members under the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act. It refused to impeach a member of the Commission on Elections despite the strong evidence to prove his guilt.

The Senate today is a far cry from its predecessor in more respectable years. There are at least three of its members who do not belong there because of their disgraceful lack of civic virtue except for the fatuous support of voters who foolishly think (?) that success in the box office is enough qualification for public office. One of them continues to appear in a talk-fest television show that has cheapened his high office. There is that member facing charges concerned with the Kuratong Baleleng massacre, and another member is moonlighting as a talent for advertising for a commercial product.

The local government officials are no less honorable in general. Our members in exile for the business of "not attending" their offices as the late Artemio B. Lanuza who was the greatest President the Philippines never had. It is in the local governments that the political dynasty denounced by the Constitution has flourished unabated, with governors and mayors playing team-final lineups with their wives, children, brothers and sisters, and fathers and uncles to hold on to political power to the exclusion of non-relatives. Competition is irrelevant; only blood ties are essential. And like other public officials, they owe their loyalty to their vassals who can and do vote massively.

And, as my dear Butch, that is the reason I did not complain to our government officials and ask them to do something about the conduct of those ruthless so-called Filipinos who did not stand, as citizens of our Republic should, to render honor to the National Anthem as they were being played. What I did was recall that as children during our time, we were taught by our parents and teachers to rise in reverence and loyalty as we sang Ang Pambansang Awit while the Philippine flag was being raised.

That was to the Senate and the schools I was complaining, for it is there that the problem can be solved.

Will the knight kill the damsel?

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

OR THE RACE of it, the recent decision of the Securities and Exchange Commission not to revoke the certificate of incorporation of Libertas Plans Inc. (LPI)—the corporation spun off last year from Pacific Plans Inc. (PPI), a move which put the Yuchengco family in the eye of a raging controversy—may look like a victory of the "good guys" (the underdog) over the "bad guys" (the Yuchengcos). Or using another metaphor, a case of a knight in shining armor (the SEC) saving, in the nick of time, the damsel in distress (the plan holders) from the dragon (the Yuchengcos). But a closer examination of the circumstances of the case reveals that the victory, if any, will be pyrrhic.

First, any damage to the Yuchengcos will most likely be to their pride (if Pacificano sets great store by his name) rather than to their pocket. Why? Because of the SEC decision, the Yuchengcos will not be asked to put up any additional financial capital contribution, may have been relieved by past dividends from PPI, have spillover of the financial problems of the PPI/LPI, or the risk of the Yuchengco companies will probably be temporary.

Second, the 34,000 remaining holders of traditional plans (where they are guaranteed interest and other robust benefits regardless of what the rates of availment) are not only not going to get any relief as a result of the SEC move, but any chances of the new PPI management turning the company around have just been shot down.

Worse, the SEC decision drags the 400,000 plan holders of LPI (the agents) was designed to prevent them)—those who have fixed-value education, memorial or pension plans—into a quagmire from which the possibility of escape may be almost nil.

How so? Let us count the ways.

The revocation of LPI's corporate personality means that its assets and liabilities are now folded back into PPI. But PPI is under a court "stay order" which gives it relief from paying its liabilities. Which in turn means that what is left of the 400,000 plan holders of LPI will not be able to get, loosing them in limbo. The effect? Yes, now have another 400,000 plan holders who, because of the SEC order, cannot get any entitlement. Those who are still paying for their plans will have no incentive to continue their payments. What is more, nobody will want to buy any more plans, which in turn puts in jeopardy the livelihood of around 20,000 agents.

The irony of it is that even if PPI were not under a court stay order, the SEC has made sure (albeit unwittingly) that what is due to the LPI plan holders will not be paid. Why? Because at the same time that it issued its decision to revoke LPI's incorporation, it also sent a directive to 42nd Commercial Banking Unit), the Yuchengco bank which manages the trust funds, to "preserve the trust fund" of Libertas Plans Inc., until further orders of the Commission." Sounds like a good order, until you realize that the reason a trust fund is constituted is precisely to answer payments to plan holders, so that "preserving" the trust fund means nonpayment of benefits!

Is there a possibility, however remote, that by putting back together the fixed-value plans with the open-ended plans (PPI), and retaining the court order, as well as the SEC's order to BCBC—in other words, moving back to the pre-controversy situation—there will be no

Too fast too soon

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE CLOSING up somebody on Good Advice is more by sound than catch the misery of Nelson Mandela in the first free and democratic elections of 1994, analysts have opined that to forge bigger on the understanding and cooperation between the numerically dominant blacks and the 10 percent white minority, the descendants of the European settlers in the past three centuries. As I had earlier pointed out, the problem is not for white minority controls 90 percent of the wealth while the blacks who make up 90 percent of the population, are, for the most part, poor and lacking in influence, power and training. The point can be reduced to one: and cooperation in the African continent would have to be from the top, and that it's only in say that white dominance goes. Mona will be.

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There's no denying that the European Ironsides man have made South Africa the progressive country it is today but they achieved this through the lens of the settler Africans. Unfortunately, this same colonialism, the European settlers and their descendants, have also driven the blacks to the Stark Africa, the political, economic and social mainstream, by now, necessitating the apartheid policy that controlled even their personal lives. Thus, while South African banter of Pass Book administrators, in human accounts are woefully Thatcher.

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With the swipe of African nationalism following the victory of Nelson Mandela and now his successor President Thabo Mbeki, the blacks are now in the driver's seat of the country's affairs. Better late—but. There's a high level of unemployment among them, which has aggravated criminality, especially in Johannesburg. To alleviate it, the Mbeki government has enacted a series of laws to expand economic opportunities for the majority of the blacks, among them the policies of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and "Affirmative Action" which says that when efficient and a white person and the job, the black takes precedence. Many whites have complained of reverse discrimination, but most blacks are, not ready to replace the white workers. It would take at least one or two generations before the blacks catch up.

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Unfortunately, there's little indication that the richer white remnant beyond their exclusive country club is much concerned with the blacks.

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Neighboring Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) should serve as a stark example of how local change could be if both whites and blacks don't come to their senses. Rhodesia itself was an exposition of primitive instruments farm machines and products, and military equipment. It achieved this at a time when its counterparts in the outside world were a solitary bridge through South African. Now reports say there's a shortage of almost anything there, including food, even though it has access to the world through railroad ports of its own.

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If there are worse in South Africa, or not a white Zimbabwean or farmer who used to operate about 20,000 hectares of farm and cattle lands. Today he only has 500 hectares left, as Mbeki has since one day and occupied the rest of his property by valid land reform. Likewise, since the authorities tolerate such land grabbing, White South Africans are keenly watching the developments there.

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If South Africa—and the whole continent, for the matter—is to survive, positive cooperation must be struck among its "rainbow" citizenry. Many of the white voters don't seem to see this look at them as free possessions and not they were intruders. Zimbabwe's misfortune today is to have been the blacks who labored for the white man but the latter never rights a betrayal for those who was good enough. The country has all the potentials to be the major economic player in that part of the globe, but the reason for its present state is the triumph of exclusionism or black nationalism. Its leaders, regardless of color, will have to come together and think of their country good if they want it to occupy its rightful place in the world. There is a common saying that when the elephants unravel and human resources, strange geographic features and vast arable domain. If only they could get their act together.

Ugly secret

NOW do you tell your mother to stop talking about how lucky she is to have such a perfect husband? How do you discuss your misery of the notion that they should find somebody like Pepe because all men are bastards, you have studied? What would you do if you discovered that the father whom you have loved and adored had impregnated his own grandniece, the same girl who lived with your family?

I learned about this about the same time a massive hit piece of dust tire has risen. Since the storm, it would rather have been in Indonesia or Thailand living among cats so it not be the resistant dust house rule for everybody normal and by-the-I have.

Aside my grandniece, is the daughter of my Papa's nephew. She used to visit us our house, together with two other relatives, doing household chores without pay in exchange for their services, my parents sent them to school.

Jenny was only in sixth grade years, and is now about to finish college. During all these years, I was in Manila earning my college degree and later working in my own law department, so our interaction was limited to small talks when I called home and the answered the phone, or when I went on three occasions.

Everyone has only the kindest words for her: she is a very diligent student, she is dependable and receives the total honor.

Since we were not close, I was surprised when Jenny called me up the day after Christmas and requested me to go to their house. Their house is in Papa's hometown, a sleepy place about five hours' drive from the city where we live.

When I arrived, Jenny told me point blank that she was pregnant. It was almost a joke, "Gregorio, chan mo ako ng ano ang ano ako," but seeing her solemn face, I bit my tongue. I asked who the father was, and she said, "Erica, your Papa."

I was stunned. I was shaking for a while and wanted to cry and I saw Auntie, her Nanay and Jenny crying, too.

When I regained my composure I asked her who else knew about her condition. She said, "Only my parents, and now you."

Then she added, "Erica, I have no plans of causing a big scandal. All I want is to get rid of the baby inside my tummy and live somewhere else until I graduate."

She talked about how she could carry our close plans. Then I told her that the best I could do was to send her to another member of the family. She said her others wouldn't have her because...

And why would I would buy her now?" "Because you are the only one," she said, "and things such as this, sana can be destroyed and handle better than daughters. And also because one of us is a lawyer." I was sure, "But then as mentioned to us all our problems when I saw her and Papa in a rather compromising position."

But I don't. I could feel the sexual tension in the air. I am no sex expert, but I have enough about it to be able to find such tension when there is one. But in that time, I lunched that thought and I was sure that I was just imagining things. Besides, you know what and not fitted to fall prey to temptations of the flesh. We had an intimate close encounter on a family room. He didn't even go to go for jeans. Sure, he had his shirts, but a quick tongue and sometimes holding some intimate, tender moments kisses. But that was not sexual.

Aside from the fact that I was the oldest of the children born to and raised in the house on that week that she decided on our encounter. He brought us to school, and fetched us from there. He attended PTA meetings. I cannot remember any impromptu infraction or an event being that had without him being present.

When I was in fourth grade, we had our first beauty camp. Every night he would go to the camp site and check on me. Because parents were not allowed inside the area, he would push his car in order and drop there. He told the event masters that he wanted to keep a close eye on his only son.

It was Papa's curse that in his three daughters, parents smoked and drank and were men. He would wake up in the middle of the night to bring one of his daughters to the hospital, only to wake up again at 6 a.m. to fetch another daughter whose date had definitely ended.

I am pretty sure my love must have been a thousand and one percent that would decision me love good our father is. In fact, I was so close to him that I would tell him my secrets. I was like, their defender friends in high school warned their fathers to be like Papa. And the oldest only half as tall, "If you are half as good as my father, I am going to marry you."

Now I wonder if he could see the same things if this lesson did not die.

As I mentioned, Jenny has already gone through an abortion. She has gone back to our city that are our house to continue her studies. Because her parents assured that it is better her schooling, I used her a big bunch of my allowance for her board and lodging. I am enough financial for Jenny, me sending somebody to college classes and to finish a course.

But is it over? Not quite immediately. I feel as if I am having a difficult balancing act for all parties concerned. Above every day Jenny sends new emails, and most all of them are pleasant ones. While I understand where she is coming from, I feel hurt and get affected by the things she says against my father. But I am here there at, not because they are true but because I am a daughter who thought she also can give our house. How can her away and that would be the end of our humorous lovely life.

Sometimes, I feel overwhelmed by the calmness of the whole situation. I am carrying the house of a problem I am, this created not caused. Is this perhaps God's way of teaching me a lesson? Is this a test of my faith? Is this a cross that I am destined to carry? Is this a punishment for my sins? I am not sure about these questions, but I am sure of one thing: I will not be ashamed to face God should He call me to His presence.

Jenny has come to me and asked for my forgiveness. I have forgiven her. I have also told her that I will not be ashamed to face God should He call me to His presence.

YOUNG BLOOD

Jhaki

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? Be welcome contributions from the mature-minded regardless... Ed.

Not an 'unusual' reaction

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WHEN she testified for the prosecution in the case case against Dennis Bautista case, Ana Corazon de Leon-Pangilinan, Dr. Jane Pagaduan-Lopez, felt disadvantaged when she could use only foreign studies to explain what seemed to be Karen Sevilla's "unusual" reaction to the alleged attack.

According to her own testimony, Karen was in a stupor with drink and less than she could barely take to what was happening to her. Indeed, she said that she had no memory of the actual sexual assault. Her parents and relatives, including Ms. Camcilla (she said) had his way with her. Such a reaction, said Pagaduan-Lopez, was symptomatic of "post-traumatic stress disorder," where an event is so traumatic or damaging the mind blocks out the memory of it in order to survive. It is a coping mechanism, she explained, that is often seen in victims of another psychiatrist, Dr. Paulita Duane, one by and large dismissed by Judge Virginia Torres. Even as she conceded her scope of victim acted not by a fight or flight response, she still found no basis for declaring Karen's behavior as "unusual" or "unnatural." She might have found out that precisely because of the paucity of local data that increased reliance on foreign literature. She still found no Karen's behavior to fight off Carmelo or take advantage of several "opportunities" to escape.

But if she had only bothered to listen under-trained Pagaduan-Lopez's testimony, called up the Philippine General Hospital, and conducted her own research, the judge might have known approximated the scientific basis of Karen's "unusual" reaction. She might have found out that precisely because of the paucity of local data that increased reliance on foreign literature. She still found no local study among Filipino rape victims. Except might then have discovered that Karen's "unusual" reaction was one of the unusual and was, in fact, consistent with the behavior of most survivors of rape.

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SEXUAL VIOLENCE 1999 to December 2000, revealed of 354 rape cases were undertaken treatment and counseling at the UP-PGH Women's Desk. Almost three-fourths of the victims were from 18 to 24 years old, single, equipped with at least a high school education, and employed. In other words, except for being slightly older than the average, Karen would have fit right in with most of the women involved in the study.

Among the study's conclusions was that there was a higher incidence of rape by persons known to the victims as opposed to "stranger" rape. This, by the way, is supported by similar studies conducted in many other countries, as well as by figures reported by the Philippine National Police.

What's even more interesting is that it is the nature of having been betrayed by someone she knows that "alters" the behavior of the victim during and after the assault. In the words of Pagaduan-Lopez, the greater the degree of shock and disbelief on the part of the victim.

"Many of the women said they couldn't believe it was happening to them," she said. "Some even mumbled to themselves that they were telling themselves that maybe they were making too much fuss in the behavior of the attacker."

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FORGIVE this ramble, why, according to the study, "physical resistance is not the most common reaction of the victim. Behavior such as pleading and bargaining with the perpetrator is much more common."

In most of the reported rape, the perpetrator did not use force or threat to act other deadly weapon, and yet the women did not actively physically resist the attack.

"There is a very wide range of coping behavior for the survivor of rape," says Pagaduan-Lopez, though a huge study such 8,000 prosecutors found this survivor of "rape" type presented for more physical injuries, that is they were more apt to resist and struggle, than the minority who were raped by men known to them. Pro women, after all, are mentally pregnant with coping mechanisms which have only been to strengthen boyfriend, spouse, date, friend, workmate, boss or acquaintance.

In her defense, Bautista made much of Lucasian allegation that there was more to her relationship with Karen than just sex, including the hiring of former president of the Davao Chamber of Commerce of which Karen was once active director. The judge used this to gave credence to the possibility that the sex was consensual, and that nothing, although, going by the UP-PGH study, is "more than nothing sequestration" might explain Karen's reaction, or lack of it, as the case may be.

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PAGADUAN-LOPEZ points out that she tells "a basic question" to the light of the judge's decision which reveals her fatally appreciation of, or even outright refusal to acknowledge, the experts' testimony.

"It is also regular to a legal professional critically bound to do his or her own research on human behavior in deciding what is 'normal' and 'non normal' reaction to a heinous crime such as sexual assault?" Pagaduan-Lopez wrote in her case. And about the evidence of her own, she said, in many cases, that Filipino lawyers do insist on "objective research or person circumstance."

For the discussing trash of the matter is that too many judges in this country have their decisions on such "objective research" and "person" such as rape, sexual harassment or sex harassment, not on objective evidence or expert testimony or on what science has established, but on what their own personal biases tell them should be a normal, or a woman "should" react, or "should" believe.

Gender bias is still very much alive and kicking in our courts, and as Europe has shown, altering the sexist perpetrators of such a bias are judges who happen to be women.

The decline of the English language

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Marilyn L. Burgos

TODAY, on there's more to language than speaking it fluently. A reader who prefers to remain anonymous is disturbed by the way people are talking regarding the decline of fluency in the Philippines, but is worried one is to do so in English.

However, there was a lot of other interesting information. But you didn't know, for example, that the word "Tagalog" is derived from the Spanish word "Tonto English" also sounds spelt it "Tenso," which is in my dictionary doesn't mean anything, the word tonto and it means stupid and Tagalog English is more Tagalog mixed with English. Taglish is more English with Tagalog words. That was difficult since neither this nor the other one Tonto English mean was that the Tenso were feeling left out and sort of place and wanted to belong. That's like the mixed-up feelings of the "Boys" saying "Boys" and "Pare" and the half-Chinese saying "Ah-mah" and "Pare" and the half-Chinese saying "Ah-mah" all I guess it's all the same to be in and feel accepted whatever that is, so when these Tenso (who used not among the crowd) due to their European features and higher complexion, and sometimes hair-color potential, identities from the mainstream. "Tagalog-speaking" mestizos in Manila," they figured they'd humiliate the English language and Tagalog by that manner, too.

Others bring me to another topic, which is the need for people to speak and write English. I give the example of the children that were taken from more people grow up, they'd form a deep-rooted distrust of the English-based. Unfair people, they deserve none to happen. As a matter of fact, all were the ones to people close their way up the social ladder just to belong. Sure seems like a many of time.)

There is opportunity to return to Only English, known as "Kolokyal English," which is even worse in not to school were possible. At the same time, I do agree to use one found to say old ideas means

but think because it isn't the only guilty party; it also refers to all the villages (Marikina, St. Scholastica, St. Paul, Woodrose, Miranda and so on) where the children are taught to speak "proper" English—not necessarily academically good nor even could expect your child to get achieved all occasions, but just expensive. So all these parents expounding about a shortfall rate with GAP in Pinoy English, but they're the ones to send their children go to education centers in the south metropolis. Supposedly the hallof these students were teachers or faculty, a consistent that a not know one by my southern accent when the group of "Boys" is already a mestizo.

But let me give you some examples which could make you cringe. "Let's make cook the fishball."

"Make quiet to me what happened." "She's so pity-ness" and "I'm so not so, make popular me mestizo."

To round up your education, the article explains that "Kolak" refers to a mixture affiliation of Philippine native and dates back to the 1300s, when it referred to Pennsylvania living in the country. These Spaniards had a weakness to eat the sweet immensely as in every other meal, as the group of Filipinos who had to learn to them since it was difficult to make out their train of thought. It's possible they didn't have one for decades these ingenious Spaniards invented "at the top of the food chain—and promptly held the highest prestige" and the word began to refer to others who were not necessarily exotic or rare but could have been of European or American descent and who spoke English well. Nowadays, it's got to be said that the label invoked well "to include native members of the Philippine upper classes, regardless of their racial background." It explains why jobs exist Chinese mestizo or native Filipinos, as long as they're rich, or called rich, or said to "look" like they have a European appearance.

There's been the case of the Filipino professionals of the Philippines, who have been known as "Kolak" (i.e., the so-called educated middle class, who do not use Conic English and neither ethnic and social ex. The English-influenced group not only expects to speak straight English but truly even call it as Queen's English. Their children are not allowed to "fight dirty" or "fight management," although the we've doesn't even when's doing the to making sure that one's children will some even instead of English. It includes Chinese mestizos who may or may not have a Western-ness face but can't be mistaken for foreigners. This group can't understand its surroundings. They know themselves as "Americanized" or "colonized Filipinos" by other Filipinos and have to their educational opportunities. Oddly enough a story of mine and another good friend who constantly addressed in Chinese whenever they travel to Chinese, Hong Kong or Singapore. The Chinese apparently can't tell the difference into the Davao city. There's don't even need to prove their Filipino identity by answering Filipino words while speaking English. There's also the fact that they have by the time trying to get a visa to go abroad where it makes sense to be able to speak the language properly.

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How do you tell your mother to stop talking about how lucky she is to have such a perfect husband? How do you discuss your misery of the notion that they should find somebody like Pepe because all men are bastards, you have studied? What would you do if you discovered that the father whom you have loved and adored had impregnated his own grandniece, the same girl who lived with your family?

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Aside

An approach to peace

WITH a sense of urgency, we ask the President and members of Congress to take immediate positive action on the following multi-dimensional approach to peace in our country.

1. Pass a joint resolution reasserting the Philippines to promote the abolition and 'outlawing' of war, and the culture of death, violence and hatred and to declare—as statutes in pub-

LETTERS

lic policy public morals, public order, good customs, public interest and welfare, and the common good—the glorification of guns, violence, sex, and pornography in print, TV and radio, movies, billboards, streamers, posters, stickers and other media.

2. Increase the penalty for illegal possession of firearms and violation of any firearms law from reclusion temporal (12 years to 20 years) without parole or pardon to reclusion perpetua (life sentence), the offender may be pardoned after 30 years in prison, unless by reason of his constant or other serious causes he is declared unworthy of pardon). Public officials found guilty of illegal possession of firearms should be barred from holding any public office. Similarly, anyone found guilty of planting evidence shall suffer the same penalty.

3. **Make it criminal for anyone**—except police officers, soldiers, or licensed private security guards in uniform and on duty, to carry **firearms in public places. The** legislation should in no way impair the privilege of a responsible sportsman or gun owner to keep a licensed gun or guns or a legal club.

4. Stop the issuance of "permits to carry" firearms outside the residence. Nobody should be exempted from this law. If "license to possess" firearms may be issued for safekeeping at home and only for protection purposes or condition, its applicant has a safety deposit box at banks duly approved by the authorities.

5. Legalize and put under tight government control the local production of firearms for use by the police and the military or by civilians for sports and home protection.

6. Ban the importation of firearms. Only high powered guns may be imported but only if necessary for the use of the police and military.

7. Bar gun-toting in public roads and other public places.

8. Relocate gun stores inside military and police headquarters.

10. Ban the manufacture, importation and sale of toy guns or gun replicas.

11. Prohibit heavy tinting of windshields and glass windows of motor vehicles. Nothing should obscure the view of the interior of motor vehicles from the outside.

12. Mandate the periodic public inventory of all confiscated guns, their destruction or their conversion into other useful implements.

The period of debate for gun control is over. The time to act is long overdue. We those who believe in gun control no explanation is necessary, for those who do not believe, no explanation is possible.

—RAMON PAREDES,
president, Alliance for the Common Good
Ang Kapitbisig and Sanlakas Sweeney,
Novaliches, Quezon City

New facility to put an end to garbage disposal threat

A GROUP led by a certain Dr. Ramon of Barangay Macabebug, Cabanatuan City is reportedly opposed to the coming-up of a material recovery facility (MRF) that will classify household and commercial or industrial wastes into those that are non-compostable and those that are biodegradable, and then recycle the biodegradable into organic compost fertilizer and convert the residual wastes into concrete bricks, pavers and filling materials. The group has threatened to file a "class suit" against the city government. It claims that they were not consulted about the project.

The MRF is supposed to put an end to the garbage disposal nuisance that has worsened with the closure this year of the city's open garbage dumpsite in Barangay Valle Cruz. It is also designed to preserve the environment and generate additional revenues and employment opportunities.

The city government can use the shared ink from the MRF in rehabilitating or developing the closed Valle Cruz dumpsite into an ecopark.

To be manned by scavengers who were displaced from the closed Valle Cruz dumpsite, the MRF can process 24 metric tons of organic compost fertilizer daily from biodegradable waste materials.

Cabanatuan City generates an average of 200 cubic meters of garbage daily.

The city government expects to recover the expenses for tipping fee through the collection of minimal garbage fees—but it plans to charge every household and commercial or industrial establishments.

Also, the Cabanatuan City government will be given a 10.5 percent share from the sale of fertilizer and 5 percent from the sale of construction products.

Dr. Ramon' group must shed its irrational and obsessive fears. It should instead make itself a partner of the administration in pursuing its program for Cabanatuan City's sustained socio-economic growth and development.

—DOMINGO M. DOLO,
former barangay chairman,
H.S. Garcia, Cabanatuan City

INQUIRER Visayas

Editor Jose Bandaysel
Bureau Chief Edralyn L. Benedicto

Ati people retell 'Barter of Panay'

By Jo-Marchee Clemente
Manila, Antique

ANTIQUE'S Ibatan-ayan festival kicked off in late April with a strong statement that challenged a new historical narrative known as one of Philippines as the "Barter of Panay."

Saying it was not possible for the Ati people to have traded the Panay island with a golden salakot (wide-brimmed native hat) and a golden necklace, organizers of this year's Binirayan event through words the movement of the coming of the 10 Bornean datus in Malandog, Hamtic on April 28, without the usual "feasting" they have been doing since 1974.

Gov. Sebastian Zaldivar-Enverga also issued a challenge to historians to look anew into this historical incident as she offered her presence as emcee for any authoritative critical or cultural conference that would bring the matter before the public agenda.

A fresh dimension for the festival was the participation of the Ati community in the program in contrast to tasks before. Ati in the past.

Dubbed one of the biggest real estate transaction in history by some writers, the "Purchase or Barter" of Panay could not have been possible because the Ati people were living and gathering there and unlikely to have a proprietary concept of land, according to some anthropologists.

Still, history bears the development of the barangay, as the beginnings of an organized society, through the settlements set up by the Bornean pioneers. Thus, Panay had also been referred to as the cradle of Philippine civilization.

One of the Ati leaders, Virgilio Gomez, agreed on this observation.

Ati version

Gomez is the president of the fledgling Lugay ng Mahinumuhin sa Tribu (LUMIT), an association of tribal leaders in the country. He is now refreshing memory so that he and his people will be able to share their own version of what happened in Panay.

At the moment, Gomez is convinced that Ian Fordonan did not sell our home Panay even to our historian, Prof. Jesus Jocson, said in his 1917 book "Binirayan Pethiquanes de Panay" that the cession of historic lost was celebrated at PET 2700 in modern Philippine money.

Gomez said the story that can among them ati was different from Fatherian Irrigado E Zaide's account in his book "Philippine Political and Cultural History."

In his book, Zaide said Marikudo organized the rulers of the ten lands with the Bornean datu "with the approval of his people" at a price consisting of a gold salakot (wide-brimmed hat) for Marikudo and a long gold sword, kris or Queen Macaraya's gong.

He cited the 1907 "Margate" Manuscripts of Padre Jilan, teacher and historian's book as reference.

Gomez said "it is not within its culture to partake of something not given to him directly; they will not ask for their share, they will just go away."

He narrated that according to his forefathers, the leader of the Ati then was "Amang Pulpulan," the father of Marikudo. Then, too, was could not be a leader of the Ati if he were not married.

He said that when the Bornean datus came, it just happened that it was Marikudo's wedding and Amang Pulpulan told his son to just handle the visitors and talk to them.

"We do not know how Marikudo could have communicated with the datus. But when the visitors handed gifts to Marikudo, he didn't and that's when Marikudo said 'dina kayo pag abot kanad kayo sa kasakayan' ... which means, do not go yet, we are still talking. The talk indicates that they have given Panay to the visitors, but they got angry with Marikudo. That was it as the last time we would hear of Marikudo."

Oral history

Gomez said he was not a direct descendant of Marikudo, but his forefathers attended Marikudo's wedding and the chiefs had been told to throw their support to him.

"To her, we were told that seven point got crowned that day, Marikudo and Binirayan-ginwang and our others. They were the ladies not chosen by Marikudo and so the other men got them for their wives. Marikudo made so many so he can take care his ife, their co-leader, so a messenger was asked to look for pretended brides. One came back with seven and Marikudo chose Dumi Bisit."

Gomez said that according to stories that had been passed down to them, it was among Bisits who demanded Marikudo's wedding and witnessed the surrender of the datus.

"So, OK! The story in the stories from Borneo had a son called Gimo and this was from where my great grandmother Apay Macay Gimod her roots. I am still waiting our family tree though," he said.

The Binirayan Festival was conceptualized in 1975 by the late Gov. Evelio Javier, historian Benjamin-ayan Maca, writer Lucas Montilla and Gov. Sally Perez. It was anchored on the Hinilaya legends, about how the Bornean datus had to Dato Puti (Sri) from the tyranny of Sultan Makatunao and landed in Panay.

Perez said the golden hat and the necklace, if it happened as all, should be seen as a symbol of friendship between the foreigners and the Ati people, not as a price in exchange of the islands.

AMONG the highlights of the Binirayan Festival is the floral parade and the reenactment of the arrival of the 10 datus.

Bed and Breakfast in San Jose, Antique

By Hazel P. Villa
San Jose, Antique

IN THE RUSTIC and handsome province of Antique where "the mountains meet the sea," lodging houses are few and far between.

Despite the iron curtain of rivers for white-water rafting, swimming at secluded beaches and just plain sightseeing of mountain ranges and other natural wonders, there's still the need for a respectable but affordable overnight stop-over.

The following day he that since-new life-time view of the cute cafeteria flavors at selection on a day at leisure like lipsings in Antique.

Tourists and visitors need not worry anymore if their wish to stay overnight in San Jose, the capital town of Antique, since a family has decided to open their compound for visitors-inclusive or not business.

The bed and breakfast concept came to Dr. Melvin de la Serna and his wife Pet, a pharmacist, two years ago when their medical representative friends opted to spend the night in the couple's house in Barangay 2 on Hidalgo Street, known among the natives as Puerto Corazon, instead of staying in lodging houses.

The visitors must have found the De la Serna's home and their wide and lush garden such a comfort. Soon, word got around that this was the place to stay when in Antique since the couple was content with their hospitality.

"We opened our compound to friends and medical representatives because not all the lodging houses here can accommodate them," said Melvin.

Pet, a former medical representative from Information City manages the family pharmacy here.

To maintain their one privacy and keep visitors comfortable, the De la Serna's have formed a secretariat at the end of the garden into a cottage that can house five people, complete with the amenities found in a private house—albeit with some expensive televisions, soft, gently contoured linens and individual mattresses.

The family composed of 2,500 square meters all their needs.

Pill-boxer visitors coming, another concept for them was built while he added more novelty items and had a house to the garden filled with trees like tamarinds, Indian mangoes and jackfruit, 30 rambutan and 4 four-month-old monkeys.

Several frameworks, a mini bar, bird-houses, and a pigs and boasts that the garden that resembles at night where the sounds of those small waterfalls mix with classical music. One is moved to exclaim said Hidalgo that's plants deliberately from the lighting that is his installed, hidden among the plants.

Among other things that amaze the couple is how the simple act of hospitality has given birth to others like partners of the Jesuit Society Club, medical associations and even helped less marriage for the disabled since Melvin himself had polio as a child. The De la Serna compound also had its first garden wedding this May.

And now for the breakfast at P50 per head. Among the all-around homemade, will serve you a hearty breakfast of rice, eggs, tuna other dishes, juice or coffee, and water-drawn you can have as much as you want.

You eat all of that beside a cornucopia of Mikmanyo's. Then and after lounging, you may take a walk at the backyard until you see a messenger and decide to have all the calories with a swim in the beach which is part of a nearby commercial center of nature from your cottage.

And you can get all of that for P 1,000 a day including breakfast. (Booking can be made at (036) 5400-577)

AFTER a good night's sleep in a soft bed, hearty breakfast follows at the garden of the De la Serna's.

ERRATUM

This should appear on BW's Supplement yesterday on page B9.

UMI

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Across the NATION
National Editor Tony Bergonia

Residents fight demolition on railway

By Carmela Reyes
PDI Central Luzon Desk

MEYCAUAYAN, Bulacan—Tension rose in this town on Friday after the government started the demolition of houses along the old Philippine National Railways' tracks to give way to the Northrail project.

At least 100 residents armed with sticks and pieces of metal rod in Barangay Calvario faced the demolition team but violence was averted after the team decided to back off.

Engr. Fernando Villanueva, public chief, said the demolition team assigned in the village decided not to proceed to avoid a confrontation with the residents.

The residents installed local and National Housing Authority officials, saying they were not provided with a decent relocation site. They said the government asked them to initially stay in vans after their houses were demolished.

In Barangay Bahgad, at least nine families volunteered to demolish their houses and transfer to a relocation site provided by the government in Barangay Bayugo.

While fishers Agapito, 56, his wife and two children did not want to leave their house, they were left with no other choice because they knew the project would push through and they would be evicted sadly displaced.

But many of the 2,000 residents along the railroad said the 20-hectare relocation site was poorly prepared.

Mayor Eduardo Alcalla has urged the residents to be patient and stay in temporary shelters because houses in the site have yet to be built.

He said the local government had no hand in the demolition because the Northrail project was a national government project.

The demolition of houses along the old PNR tracks in Bulacan would pave the way for the rehabilitation of the railroad for the Northrail project that would run from Metro Manila to the Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga.

Residents living along the railroad in Calumpit, Marilao, Bocaue, Bulacan, Guiguinto and Malolos will be displaced.

According to the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, 12,675 families living along the Bulacan segment of the Northrail project area will be displaced.

A HUDCC statement said the clearing of the right of way of commercial and business establishments will be prioritized.

Many residents are caretakers and members of the Pagkakaisa ng Mamamayan sa Riles (Pamaril), and the Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay).

Constantino Lopez, 63, a widower, said they were told that they would receive P50,000 for building materials.

Residents have urged the government to continue with the dialogues to discuss their concerns about the project.

MILF slams decision clearing Metro blast suspect turned witness

COTABATO CITY—The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) yesterday assailed a court decision absolving a suspect in the Valentine's Day attack in Makati.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said the decision of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 60 Judge Manuel Causi Jr. to pardon Cappal Inal-ud-Din Kadil, alias Ibn Digno, was unfair to the victims of the explosion.

Government prosecutors have earlier sought Kadil's exoneration from the charges in exchange for his becoming a state witness against the alleged masterminds, including leaders of the Abu Sayyaf.

"That is not the justice system we are fighting for . . . If that practice will continue in our judicial system, we will suffer," Kabalu said.

He said state prosecutors should have ordered a deeper investigation of Kadil's involvement in the bomb attack.

"It's unfair. By the court's decision, I think the victims of the bombing could hardly achieve justice," Kabalu said.

Kabalu said the government's statements of the rebel support to other double-talked.

"Many of our fellow Muslims disappeared, [were] summarily executed, arrested without warrants on suspicion of having links with international terrorists. But why now a self-confessed bomber [turned state] gets off? Is it because he is with the state?" he asked.

Kadil reportedly supplied the explosive used in the bombing. He surrendered to authorities in Cotabato City last May 6.

Kadil admitted that Abu Sayyaf spokesperson Abu Sabaiasan Al-Sayyaf hired him to plant the bombs in Glorietta 2 in Makati City.

The explosion killed three people and injured 93 others. The blast also set two nearby buses on fire. "This is a perverted justice system that rewards or frees criminals and glorifies treachery," Kabalu said. —Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau

ROUNDUP

Couple found dead in ditch

SAN MARIO, Pangasinan—A couple was found dead in an irrigation ditch in Barangay Tito Domingo here on May 07. Police said the couple had bullet wounds in the heads. Found near the man, whose name was not yet identified, by 7:30 a.m. still clad in shorts and was about 5-feet eight inches tall. He was wearing a t-shirt with print "Kawsing Company" and corduroy pants. The woman, who was about 25 years old and 5-feet 3-inches tall, was wearing a red t-shirt with print "Bongo Jeans" and maong shorts. Their bodies were taken to the Salsa Memorial Funeral Home. —Manuel de la Cruz, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

3 rebels shot dead

SAN RAFAEL, Bulacan—Two suspected communist rebels were shot and killed by policemen after the rebels reportedly gunned down a San Ildefonso policeman in Barangay Cruz na Daan here on Thursday. Chief Insp. Fortu Dizon, police chief of San Ildefonso, identified the rebels as Commander Jose Fernando alias Ka Bubot, both members of the Hukbong Mapagpalaya Bayan Alcalde and Bandala shot dead SPO1 Ronel Sabectan in a convenience store here. Sabectan was on his way to the provincial police headquarters in Malolos City when he was attacked. —Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Bureau

Ex-PDEA exec shot, wounded

DAVAO CITY—An unidentified gunman on board a sports utility vehicle yesterday shot and critically wounded the former chief of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) in region 11 and 12, police said. Dra. Dra. Dacua del Sol just police chief Senior Insp. Cesario Bisquer said Alfredo Lim, former PDEA director, now assigned to the Southern Mindanao regional police office, was with three other persons when he was shot at 10:30 a.m. while eating siomai in Barangay Bolugan, Alcalan when unidentified gunmen on board a sports utility vehicle (SUV) opened fire at him. Lim was driven to a hospital here by one of his companions. —Anthony Alfanta, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Fake medicines seized

LIGAYA CITY—At least P400,000 worth of fake pharmaceutical products that were about to be distributed to the market in Davao City were confiscated by operatives of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group on Monday in Bongabon, San Antonio and Barangay of Intelut Laboratories. Some were regulated medicines from the Department of Health. The seized products were found by operatives led by Senior Insp. Leonardo Lim, police chief of the town. Some of the counterfeit medicines are Amoxicillin Bencozinc, salbutamol syrup and other drugs that were packed off as products.

—Michael Lim Ichiong, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

AFP-PNP civil affairs group

CITY OF ORLAS—The 202nd Brigade Civil Affairs Battalion, which was set up on July 10, 2002, has conducted leadership seminars attended by almost 70,000 youths, according to 2Lt. Jovily de la Fuente-Cabading, spokesperson of the 202nd Infantry Brigade based here. A first in the Army history, Japan's response is to conduct community-based activities for development or nation building, Cabading said. The unit hosted visits and orientations for the public, and gives outdoor trainings on cultural sensitivity. Last year, a Mangyan leader lectured to them for three days on the Mangyan culture. Another one is scheduled for all women in Brendan and Dasol district. Brendan will be the second week of June. The Aglipay Labor Orientation seminars for women about their role in society. "We tell them that insurgency starts in the family," said Cabading.

—Rizalyn Hosia, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

WAYWARD
A bus from Bugallo City, bound for San Fernando City, La Union is stuck in crisis and ragamuffin after it fell into a 20 foot ravine along Magallan Road, Quirino Highway in Barangay Poblacion Burgos, La Union. There were no reported casualties.

Cop, 6 others held for steel theft

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Negros Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—A policeman and his six companions were arrested on Tuesday night after they were caught cutting the steel beams of a three-ton railroad bridge in E.B. Magalona town, Negros Occidental.

Senior Insp. Rodrigo Rapsi, town police chief, identified the policeman as PO1 Mike Barrido, desk officer of the E.B. Magalona police station.

He said the arresting police officers found Barrido who supervising his companions in cutting steel beams of the bridge owned by the Hawaiian Philippine Co. in Hacienda San Jose, Barangay Daruga, E.B. Magalona, 33.9 km north of here.

The six were identified as Herman Collera, Jimby Alcoba, Teodito Bacalocos, Rolly Tapada, Jade Bermejo, all residents of E.B. Magalona, and Jerry Saez of Silay City.

Recovered from the suspects were two acetylene tanks, an LN truck and one motorbike each. Barrido was also detained at his official quarters.

Rapsi said they also impounded six loads cargo trucks, which were supposed to be used in the transport of scrap iron. Charges are being prepared against them.

Police said they were able to catch the suspects in the act after they received a tip from a concerned citizen.

Barrido and his six companions were detained at the E.B. Magalona police station and pending the filing of theft charges against them.

Roxas water exec denies project scam

By Felipe V. Celino
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—"My conscience is clear. Not a single centavo went into my pocket."

Gerard Andrada, Metro Roxas Water District (MRWD) board of directors chair, made this statement as she questioned the objectivity of the fact-finding committee that found alleged irregularities in the water district's expansion project financed by two loan packages totaling P500 million.

Andrada, also wife of Roxas City Mayor Antonio Del Rosario, also slammed Michelle Brando, MRWD general manager as some, for officiating the expansion project when he had all the chance to question it when it was approved early last year.

Both the women said that the committee's findings contravened the earlier position that the project is not viable.

In her three-page reply to the 21-page report of the fact-finding committee (FFC) chaired by Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) Commissioner Wenante Cornit, Andrade said the FFC went beyond its scope.

Ibid, Mrs Rotan III created the FFC in the wake of questions from water consumers on the viability of the water expansion project.

Findings

The FFC, in its report, found that a component of the expansion project, the proposed sewer treatment plant, would not be beneficial to Metro Roxas in the long run. It also found that the level of water sales that would come with the project was not justified, and that the submission of minutes of the project implementation was disadvantageous to the water district.

Andrada accused the FFC of not giving her and the rest of the water district's board members a chance to present their side, violating their right to due process.

"Where and who supplied these information cans? Although they were allowed to check . . . (the) did not give them the authority to have access to confidential matters such as those enumerated in their reports," said Andrada.

Andrada said Metro Roxas strictly observed compliance that the expansion project was not viable in August 2004.

She said Metro had attended six meetings monitoring the expansion project and had full knowledge of it but was not questioned by the FFC.

Brando said he was shocked when FFC recommended that the district board of directors be charged at the Office of the Ombudsman.

"I'm happy that the FFC found the proposed sewer treatment plant project to be not viable and beneficial to MRWD," he said.

Brando, who has been the water district's general manager for three years, had to go on leave after the MRWD's board of directors, in February, he asked the Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA) to take over the water district's management and operations.

Benguet town shedding off marijuana image

By Delmar Carbis
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

KAPANGAN, Benguet—Marijuana farms still abound in this town but local officials are quick to deny that the town is still the country's marijuana capital.

Mayor Eugelio Lesoi said many police operations had been significantly reduced over the past few years due to the implementation of livelihood programs that "has convinced farmers to stop wasting the problem's plants."

In a media forum here on Thursday, Lesoi said some reports about the town's remaining marijuana plantations "may have created the wrong impression that the town is still the number one producer of marijuana."

He quoted as an example reports that followed President Macapagal-Arroyo's March 12 direction to Baguio City to build farm to market roads leading to the town's marijuana farms.

"We are not the marijuana country's marijuana capital. (The tag was) once appropriate during the 1970s when hectares of marijuana farms existed due to lack of development," he declared. "But (this) was a different today. We are."

Lesoi said today, marijuana is cultivated only in seven strife-torn villages found in four of the town's nine remote villages.

He said marijuana is grown sporadically in Alno and Liang in Barangay Bagulin, Lan-angan and Kapes in Barangay Gadang, Tawang in Barangay Beleng-belis, and Taplak and Tadiangan in Barangay Pudong.

He said the marijuana farms in these areas are protected by curtains and can only be reached after a three to four-hour hike from the road's end.

"And there are no syndicates protecting or manufacturing these farms," Lesoi said, adding that the plantations were mere transient backyard farmers.

It is left to residents the remaining marijuana farms, Lesoi said the local government committee to implement alternative programs for farmers such as the planting of anthuriums, spraytrees or landscaping and grass covering.

In 2002, local officials destroyed only 10,000 authentic cuttings from Indian Basin, the tourist center's anthurium grower, and therefore, there is farmers in the area only villages for propagation.

Lesoi said the income from the three livelihood projects looked promising for the farmers.

GMA to go 'one-on-one' with plain folks

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo walks on the newly inaugurated boardwalk of the Mabini residential resort with owner Zaldy Co during her visit in Batangas, Alitagtag

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

AFTER forcing the bitter pill of tax reforms on an unwilling public, President Macapagal-Arroyo is taking a hands-on approach to make sure that the benefits of these measures will trickle down to the masses.

This is the reason why the President abandoned her 12-month old "palong-bayan" or town hall meeting strategy and began holding a series of less fancy, no-frills meetings with "ordinary people" in Mindanao over the past three days.

She said the meetings were a prelude to phase 2 of her economic reform program.

"I need to listen to the people without any intermediary eyes and ears," the President said at a media briefing in Legazpi City.

She reported that she conducted four focused group discussions in Mindanao—one in Cagayan de Oro with the business community, one in General Santos with four 3 citizens, and two in Davao with businessmen and church members. "So I can decide now how to operationalize phase 2, especially with regard to Mindanao, which has the most serious poverty problem in our country today."

Ms Arroyo's trust and popularity ratings have plunged largely over public dissatisfaction with her handling of the economy. Her determined push for tax reforms needed to solve the country's deficit problem has further alienated her from the masses.

This is why she is determined that the second phase of her economic reform program would focus on bringing the benefits of higher government revenues in the masses in the form of increased spending for public health and education and higher allocations for micro-financing for small entrepreneurs.

"We have shared the pain and we will share the gain as our strengthen our fiscal footing and steer a turning point to the new Philippine economy," she said.

Ms Arroyo cited the Ninth Ratings' recent upgrade of the Philippines' credit rating and took it as recognition as unable to the vindication of her unpopular tax reform program.

"The action of Fitch signals the start of payback time for the Filipino people. This is a clear victory of phase 1 of our economic reforms and marks the starting line for phase two as we carry down the benefits of our tough decisions to the broad masses, deliver basic needs and spare them from the impact of high prices," the President said.

She said her economic reform agenda was "far from over."

"Business confidence must be reinforced with efficient tax collection and our revitalized fight against graft and corruption," Ms Arroyo said.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo talks to Mrs. Marina Godrinal, widow of slain radio commentator Florell Godrinal, during the presentation of suspected killer identified as Charlie Antonio at the Legazpi City airport.

Journalists hit censors' order

PD 1986 was one of more than 2,000 edicts issued by Marcos after he placed the country under martial law in 1972 and suppressed dissent.

"Please be advised to submit materials of the aforementioned television programs to the Board for review and approval prior to telecast, effective immediately," said a copy of the directive presented to the business by the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines.

It said failure to comply would mean sanctions. Under the Marcos decree, sanctions included fines and imprisonment.

The circular was addressed to television station managers, block-timers and their representatives.

A jurassic fossil

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said in a text message that the circular "constitutes unconstitutional prior restraint and violates free speech." House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles and Minority Leader Feliciano Belmonte agreed.

Bataan-based Malaya Rep. Teddy Casiño said PD 1986 was "a jurassic, Marcosian fossil that should be done away with if we value our rights and freedoms and if we truly detest autocracy."

He recalled that the Marcos directive was used to censor government critics during martial law.

Abolish MTRCB

Casiño called on Congress to expedite the passage of House Bill No. 4088, which sought to abolish the MTRCB and replace it with an MTRB, or Movie and Television Classification Board, "which will only classify movie and television materials."

"So long as the current MTRCB law remains in force, there is always a threat and present danger for censorship," Casiño warned.

'Dictatorial rule?'

He said the circular was "yet another in grave freedom" and added: "Lagumbin should be made to explain the objectives and motives behind her directives."

Anakpawis party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran said the MTRCB memo was clearly mere censorship.

"It's a sign of burgeoning dictatorial rule," he said.

Beltran noted that a growing number of journalists had been killed in the country and added: "Now, the fruit of their efforts are also being subjected to possible censorship."

At least five journalists have been murdered in the country this year, adding to the 13 killed last year. This has prompted the foreign-based Committee to Protect Journalists to call the Philippines the most murderous place in the world for reporters.

Beltran said it was alarming that the Arroyo administration "and its allies in the Supreme Court and the other entrenched forces of government are resorting to measures that curtail freedom of the press."

Davide asked to explain

"Clearly, the unanswered questions and even shocking developments in the country's economic and political workings are getting out of hand, and the national government is stepping in to control the flow and dissemination of information and analysis," he said.

The leftist lawmaker said Chief Justice Hilario Davide should be made to answer for the high-court decision which the MTRCB had used frequently to invoke.

Dagohoy said: "Maybe the lawyer advising the MTRCB should review again his (or her) political and constitutional law."

GMA on Mike: He'll be back soon

Continued on A11

Later reports said Arroyo had flown to the United States.

But brother Ignacio contradicted that the other day, saying the First Gentleman had normally proceeded to South Korea to speak before civic groups there.

Arroyo is expected to return home either today or tomorrow, according to his brother.

On his part, Arroyo's spokesperson, lawyer Jesu Santos, said his client would come home soon but admitted he did not know exactly when.

Santos said he last spoke to the First Gentleman last Tuesday and that he told him he intended to come back soon.

Santos said that until now, the office of the First Gentleman had yet to receive any declaration from the three investigative bodies that were looking into allegations that gambling payoffs were going into the pockets of high officials in government.

To answer accusations

"But we're ready to face any inquiry," Bunye said in a phone interview.

The Senate is set to start its inquiry on Monday. The House, on its part, is to resume its own hearing anytime.

The Department of Justice said it was preparing to conduct its own investigation.

Clear conscience

"He is coming home at once to answer all these unfounded accusations," Santos said in GMA 7's "Saksi" show on Thursday night.

Santos said his client had told him that if his unnamed accusers had the guts to hurl charges against him, he had no fears of being there because his conscience was clear.

Santos said the President's husband had also said he would appear in the investigation of the Senate or the Department of Justice to answer the accusations.

But Santos said he did not see any reason for the DOJ to investigate the First Gentleman because the allegations were untrue.

Santos also could not say exactly when the trip (unknown was and when he was due to return.

"What I know is that he is in Singapore," Santos said. INDB a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana

Viagra label may now include . . .

Continued on A11

restraining, but has no evidence yet that the drug is to blame, said spokesperson Susan Cruzan.

This type of blindness is called NAION, or non-arteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy. It can occur in men who are diabetic or have heart disease, the same conditions that can cause impotence and this lead to Viagra use.

The FDA has 50 reports of the blindness. Viagra has been taken by more than 23 million men worldwide.

"We take this seriously," said FDA's Cruzan.

On its website, Viagra manufacturer Pfizer Inc., states: "The most common side effects of Viagra are headaches, facial flushing, and upset stomach. Less common are bluish or blurred vision, or being sensitive to light. These may occur for a short time." That language had been available before the current inquiry.

Pfizer spokesperson Daniel Nimz confirmed Friday that the drugmaker was in discussions with the FDA about adding a disclosure to Viagra's label to say that in rare cases, men taking Viagra had developed blindness. However, he said there is no proof that Viagra caused the blindness. He said that men who take Viagra often have high blood pressure and high cholesterol, which are also correlated with the conditions that can cause blindness.

FDA is working with Pfizer to determine when, if any, information about the condition should be added to the drug's label. The story was first reported by US television network CBS.

Viagra was approved by the government in 1998. It may aid in the treatment of enlarged breasts that can result from high blood pressure, even in animals indirectly.

Viagra, approved to treat erectile dysfunction, should not be used by men with heart conditions whose doctors have warned them not to have sex. Also, patients taking drugs that contain nitrates have been warned not to take Viagra because of sudden, unsafe drops in blood pressure.

The drug's label also warns of erections lasting longer than four hours, painful erections lasting longer than six hours, headache, flushed skin and vision problems.

Pfizer Inc., the New York-based maker of Viagra, said in its most recent quarterly filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission that sales of the drug was 5 percent—to $830 million in the first quarter of the year. Pfizer also said at the time that Viagra had a 68 percent worldwide market share. AP

LAGATTO portrait of Japanese Imperial Army soldier Teruo Nakamoto, believed to be one of two former Japanese servicemen who have been hiding in the mountains in Mindanao since World War II.

2 suspected Japanese stragglers sighted

Continued on A11

too early to draw any conclusions, saying there was no evidence yet that the men were WWII fighters.

"We even don't know the existence of such people, that's why we are checking," Ogawa said by phone from General Santos City. "We don't have direct contact yet with them. We just searched."

Hiroo Onoda

The reports were reminiscent of World War II straggler Lt. Hiroo Onoda, who believed the war was still on when he was found in the jungles of the Philippines in 1974. He refused to give up until March of that year, when the Japanese government flew in his former commander to formally relieve him the war was over.

Japan's Kyodo News agency said the two may be Yoshio Yamakawa, 67, and Teruo Nakamoto, 83. But the Health Ministry in Tokyo declined to confirm the report saying they could not disclose any information until officials have identified them.

Embassy officials "were in most directly with those two persons to find out if they are really Japanese soldiers, [and to find out details] beginning with their names and age," Watanabe said.

Watanabe declined to give other details.

The Japanese newspaper Sankei Shimbun said the two had been in the mountains of Mindanao for about 60 years. The newspaper said it was highly likely that they belonged to a group known as the "Fuenchen Unit."

Last September, a Japanese national who is in the lumber business ran into the two men in the mountains. It was learned later that they want to go back to Japan but were afraid of facing a court-martial for withdrawing from action, the banker said.

Another source told the paper that there may be more than 40 other Japanese soldiers living in the mountains and they all want to return to Japan, the banker said. AP/AFP

METRO
Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

EZ2 21 13 | SUERTRES 3 8 5 | FOUR DIGIT 1 8 4 1 (1st draw) | MEGALOTTO 6/45 3 5 6 9 15 31 ₱5,706,239.70 | SWEEPSTAKES 4 2 0 0 6 7 6 ₱100,000.00

Former general tagged in QC gunplay

MUSICBOX2 accused a retired general and his brother of opening fire and seriously wounding a construction worker over a parking dispute in Quezon City yesterday morning.

Retired Brig. Gen. Virgilio David and his brother Reynaldo allegedly shot at employees of EMS Construction after Reuben reportedly had an argument with one of the owners of the firm.

David, a member of Philippine Military Academy Class of 1962, is also a former administrator of the Philippine Coconut Authority, while EMS is a contractor of the Manila Water Company.

According to investigator PO2 Edwin de la Cruz, the incident happened along H. Martin Street inside Sandia 3 subdivision in Barangay Tandang Sora.

Ruberto Regala, 39, a son of the owners of the construction firm, said that before the incident, his brother Reynaldo parked their Toyota Rav 4 on a vacant lot in front of the house of Reuben at 20 H. Martin Street.

At about 7 a.m., Reuben reportedly arrived on board his car and ordered 42-year-old Reynaldo to get his Rav 4 off the lot because it was purportedly blocking the way.

Reynaldo and Reuben argued for awhile, who then engaged him in an exchange of invectives.

Reuben went into his house and came out shortly carrying a shotgun, Regala said.

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The Davids went inside their house and refused to come out without a lawyer, police said.

At about 7:30 a.m., David came out and gave himself up to the police, said Chief Supt. Hermino Radovan Jr., Central Police District director.

Reuben was no longer at home.

In an interview, David denied that he had a gun during the incident. He even doubted that anyone was shot.

He said that there were no blood stains at the scene and there was no ammunition when the shooting allegedly happened.

But the investigators said blindfolds could be seen at the scene. He added that witnesses saw David picking up spent rifle shells after the alleged shooting.

Asked about Reuben, David said that his brother was not to blame but was on his way to pay his headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo.

However, Reuben was a no show at the CPD headquarters as of press time.

The Regalas said David could be harboring ill will against them because of a libel case they lodged against him over the shooting allegedly happened.

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The case stemmed from a report by David, who is the president of the subdivision homeowners association, that Manila Water revokes EMS's contract because of allegations presented by the former military official.

Lawyer Harold Alcantara said the David brothers would be charged with frustrated homicide. AP Rep

Manila's Finest out to regain old glory

Margaux C. Grez

THE MANILA Police Academy stands as a monument for past glory and a beacon for the future of law enforcement in the city. RICHARD

STANDING now in the Western Police District (WPD) Headquarters in Manila is a white-and-blue building, a monument to the city's proud history and fitting tribute to the city's "finest" policemen.

Three decades after it closed in 1975, the Manila Police Academy was reopened early this year to revive the police force's flagging morale and reinstate its "glorious past," according to Chief Insp. Alejandro Tenguilimo Jr., in charge of recruitment development and training office.

"The academy was originally conceived in 1926 as a formal training center for police recruits," Tenguilimo said.

In-house training

"While the Philippine National Police's training arm is performing that function, the academy's main vision would be to provide in-house and specialized training for all policemen in the district, regardless of rank," he said.

Tenguilimo expressed that Manila policemen, who had been called "Manila's Finest," could use additional and extensive training to live up to that claim.

The academy officials, also the WPD Director cautioned and head of the district's Task Force Gulod, said the Manila police's beginnings were back to about a century ago.

Mostly Americans

"The Manila Police Department's duties then ensured the entire security," Tenguilimo said. He said members of the WPD district composed of 16 police units were deployed to different areas in the country.

In 1922, then Manila Police chief John W. Green established the first training school for recruits. Supervised police men had to take a prescribed course before being assigned to the field.

Tenguilimo said training at the old academy initially hosted at the Bagumbayan Police Station before being relocated at the Pamantasang Lungsod ng Maynila, lasted 18 months.

Shorter training

"Now it only takes four months to complete the police basic course," Tenguilimo said.

Back then, rookies had their own field training officers (FTO), experienced lawmen who could mentor his or her.

"During those times, a rotational way completed a cycle by the rookies," Tenguilimo said, grinning. "The FTOs made sure they trained the new policemen the right way so they would do their jobs honorably."

Tenguilimo also said Manila policemen had a "bible," which they know by heart.

"It was a black little booklet... containing rules and regulations," he said. Violations of the police's codes of conduct could mean automatic dismissal.

Tenguilimo added, "So it is said, the Manila police were looked up to by everyone, men in uniform who were dignified and honorable."

Herein, they were called Manila's Finest, just as New York City's policemen are called as "Finest".

Revitalization

With the academy's reopening, Manila police officials led by WPD director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong hope to revitalize the force.

Tenguilimo said they would require all personnel to undergo specialized training to improve their skills.

"Even if you are the chief of district director and you belong to the command group, you will be required to attend training," he threatened.

Tenguilimo with Special Training that chief Senior Insp. Wilfredo Rastrollod will also try to resolve at the academy problems with policemen involved in the city's illegal activities.

They encounter problems when newly reassigned policemen "bungle" the work for lack of knowledge of basic civil-servants and ethics rules.

"Manila Mayor Lito Atienza has often been an embarrassment victim of these untrained policemen," Tenguilimo said.

Not recognized

He said a rookie policemen last week shoot his flashlight on Mayor's face, not recognizing the city mayor.

Tenguilimo said two policemen at the Baywalk area also did not recognize the mayor, mistakenly referring to him as "pare".

"We try to solve this problem with the orientation course for reassigned policemen," he said adding that, aside from geographics and locations on manning the policemen would also undergo a special "radio dispatcher's course" to polish their duties while using police equipments.

Rastrollod, in a separate interview, said all their personnel would undergo explanatory seminars. Economic proficiency, not conduct training and other related topics.

"Some inquiries from the prosecutor's office would also talk about the proper way to conduct investigations since their cases would not be dismissed upon reaching the courts," Rastrollod said.

5,000 cops to 'babysit' students

By Luigi A. del Puerto

THE POLICE in Metro Manila will deploy 5,000 of its men to watch over students when classes open in June.

Special attention would be given to "high-risk" schools, especially those catering to Chinese-Filipino students, in distant parts like Sampaloc, said Director Vidal Querol.

"We have started coordinating with school security officials, private teachers associations and barangay officials in preparation for the opening of classes," said Querol, National Capital Region Police Office director.

Special concern

"Of special concern would be Chinese-Filipino and other high-risk schools," Querol said.

But he quickly added that this would not mean that less policemen would be guarding public schools.

The official said he wanted students, including those coming from the provinces, to "feel secure" in Metro Manila. He added that he did not want them to encounter "untoward incidents."

The police, along with barangays and school officials, would be forming a security umbrella around schools, he said.

Police officials will be holding dialogues with store owners in the educational centers near work, Querol added.

Train stations secure

Recently, Querol visited train stations in Caloocan City, Quezon City and Carmelite in San Juan.

He said security officers of the Light Rail and Metro Rail Transit had briefed him of what they had done so far to ensure the safety of thousands of students expected to be back in Metro Manila in the new few days.

In 2008, a total of 383,029 public school students were to attend schools classes opened.

The AFP chief's bad mood

ON TARGET

RANDY DAVID

SUSPENSE? probe losing steam—Inquirer's banner headline yesterday.

The current issue about jueteng will eventually die down; in the next few weeks. Politicians and police officials will lose interest in their investigations once they have to attend to more pressing problems.

Numerous investigations have been made at the Senate and the House of Representatives on jueteng but these amounted to nothing.

Jueteng operations stopped for sometime and resumed with a vengeance when the government focused on something else. The problem will reappear when some politicians or dictators make a big noise.

The only way to stop the persistent problem of jueteng, drugs and "law men," which is very popular in Mindanao, is to legalize it.

* * *

I received a letter from Br. Jose U. Ingcoy of Isabela. He thinks legalizing jueteng is the only way to solve the problem.

Excerpts from the priest's letter:

"Last week my letter in PDI column which was published presented my view about [jueteng]. I said jueteng is here to stay because gambling is an ingredient of Filipino culture. He gamble on anything. We always bet on anything up and down up our endorsements with 'puntos' tayo.' I just don't see how Archbishop [Oscar] Cruz and others look at jueteng as something so horrendous. Betting is like any other business act. Eating is good but becomes bad when we overeat. Drinking wine is good for the heart but can be harmful if taken in excess. As with jueteng, it is usually done for a pastime. It becomes harmful when you gamble what you earn to feed the family.

"Mr. Inbs, as you said, jueteng, if legalized, can be the only way out. By legalizing jueteng all these so-called wars will come to an end."

* * *

I wonder what Archbishop Cruz of the Legazpi Diocese prefers: to see abuse the large scale and reflux that many clergymen organize to build or repair churches?

Bingo and raffles are a form of gambling. Betting is no different from bingo and raffles.

* * *

Willem van Engelenburg, 68, and his brother Eric, 56, were shot dead by agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Task Force operating in Sampaloc, Manila.

The two reportedly died from wounds Joplo's men "after some scuffling from a court warrant for allegedly concealing Filipino women for cyberwars.

Why their deaths send a clear signal to other foreigners that their illegal activities in the country will not go unpunished.

A member of Malabasi Chi, some drug trafficklers have been killed [more likely executed] by government agents.

Joplo, in his own inimitable way, has sent a message to criminal foreigners: Don't mess with us.

* * *

Gen. Efren Abu, retired Army chief of staff, was in a bad mood the other day after coming from his confirmation hearing at the Commission on Appointments.

He let his tech tone be was again bypassed.

Abu reportedly dressed to and cursed his subordinates at his office. He must said he also cursed the media for the adverse publicity. He also cursed the senators and congressmen who were giving him a hard time.

Imbia, General. He might have a heart attack.

Intermodal transport terminal to rise in QC

By Tara Yap Quimsuing

AMID an ongoing (could such) amid controversy, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) yesterday sealed a deal for a multi-million peso project that would ensure an organized transport terminal on site.

The agency yesterday forged an agreement with private company Solar Sun Bus Resources Inc. (SSBRI) to begin construction of the North Road Rail Station Phase 2, a project that would complete an intermodal transport facility for northern Metro Manila.

Through a Memorandum of Agreement the MMDA signed with SSBRI yesterday afternoon, the agency has been allowed to use a ₱ 3.09 sqm project by leasing the land for the construction of a sprawling transport terminal.

To settle any legal problems that may ensue, the MMDA said the project had been approved two years ago by the Metro Manila Council, the agency's policy-making body through Resolution No. 03-07.

Working as a team

"I intend to bring the concept of working as a team. My colleagues in the MMC will always see the MMDA as a partner in the search for the best formula to manage traffic in the metropolis," MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said in a statement.

The project, which the agency estimated may cost at least ₱2.5 billion, would begin in July. It is expected to be completed early next year.

The terminal would be built near the North Avenue Station of the Metro Rail Transit.

1 out of 3 women suffering from heart disease—PHA

By Tess R. Salazar

CARDIOVASCULAR disease (CVD) is still the No. 1 killer of women, and the incidence of the disease is increasing worldwide.

One of 14.9 million individuals who died from cardiovascular diseases all over the world in 1999, 8.9 million were women, according to the World Health Organization report in 2000.

High risk

More than 45,000 women died of CVD in the Philippines in 2000. And because of the predominant perception that making the heart-wise fair priority over their husbands and children's health, the risk of women suffering from CVD without their knowing it or at least without a doctor's positive diagnosis is high.

Up to the age of 45, however, women are somewhat immune to heart disease, since their hormones have been observed to play a protective role. When menopause sets in, however, the risk of developing CVD becomes more or less equal across both sexes.

Participating cardiologists at the Philippine Heart Association's "Puso sa Puso Para Ditalih Pamasi" held May 21 at Edsa Shangri-La Hotel cautioned the dangers of CVD among good-intentioned women. The forum also launched PHA Council on Women's Health.

Dr. Esperanza Cabral, former president of PHA and the Philippine Society of Hypertension, observed that taboos hadn't discuss added views of their male patients, most of the women would brush off the question as if they were immune to CVD.

"It's like saying women blushing on a motorcycle with no helmet on while their male partners are in full protective gear," she lamented.

Cabral cited that in developed countries, public relations efforts related to CVD have been aimed primarily at male populations. As a result, the prevalence of coronary risk factors and the incidence of CHD in females have declined more for women.

CVD is an important cause of disability for many women and their physicians underestimate the value of CVD for women.

"CVD disables its women-but-four to eight times more than it does females because women are less anxious, and because public campaigns have emphasized breast cancer risks, many women are more afraid of breast cancer than of coronary artery disease," said Cabral in a speech before fellow cardiologists and the press.

More to fear

Members of the PHA Council on Women's Health also stressed that women have far more to fear from heart disease, which is poised to strike one out of every three women.

The PHA Council on Women's Health, which is Cabral's brainchild, also espoused that men are more likely to be offered treatment to prevent subsequent bouts of stroke. As a result, the number of cardiovascular deaths would more likely decrease in men, but not in women. Compared to men, women are more likely to be misdiagnosed and are more likely to die of their first heart attack.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, the keynote speaker on the forum, cited three actions plans for women's health on the Senate:

- Establish capacity office on women.
- Report on the effects of the smoking ban on the health of persons.
- Establish an office of women's health at the Department of Health.

54% Filipino women obese

The Food and Nutrition Research Institute also reached of a risk factor for CVD: prevalent among over half of all Filipino women: obesity. According to FNRI, 54 percent of adult Filipino women are obese.

"This means they have a high waist-hip ratio. It is abdominal obesity that identifies' who is at risk for cardiovascular disease," said FNRI research head Joly Informa.

Solanch is added that obesity among women has been consistently rising in the past five years.

Physical inactivity has also been identified as the most common risk factor for coronary artery disease in women.

Cabral pointed out that the risk of CAD is low in younger women, but increases significantly after menopause. The post incidence of heart attack and stroke occurs about 10 years later than in men.

"Thus when women do develop coronary artery disease, they usually have more co-morbidity because they are usually older on presentation," she added.

Cabral also said this would count those who die but that women are more likely to die of a first heart attack, and survivors would experience more long-term disability as well as higher rates of complications (stroke) and death. Atrial fibrillation, an irregularity of the heart rhythm, increases the risk of stroke in older women.

Medical updates

By Rafael R. Cavallo, MD

I DESCRIBED my medical and scientific updates by attending conventions, reading journals and discussing with my fellow doctors. I also get practical nuggets of information from medical writers in lay publications such as my colleagues in this section and our writers in the Health & Lifestyle magazine.

Thomas Bowen is one of my resource persons and current issues are by reading medical journals and health publications keeps her medically updated. All I need is to ask her is, "What's new, Glenna?" and she generally e-mails me 30,000 bytes of her recent readings. Here's a capsulized sampling of items.

MEDICAL FILES

Solving sleep problems helps epileptic children

Sleep problems may explain why children with epilepsy are often hyperactive, suggests researchers at the University of Florida.

Seventy-two of the children studied met clinical criteria for inattention or hyperactivity. All had a sleep disorder. 14 had problems paying attention during the day and eight had hyperactive symptoms. When the kids with sleep disturbances were treated, their epilepsy got better and their daytime behavior, concentration and capacity to learn increased.

Rate of type 2 diabetes in children is increasing

A recent study published in the Journal of Pediatrics reports that the rate of type 2 diabetes among children and adolescents has increased significantly over the last 15 years.

University of Colorado researchers reviewed published articles and reports on type 2 diabetes in children and adolescents between 1970 and 2004. They found that type 2 diabetes accounts for up to 45 percent of new cases among adolescents.

Weight gain, poor nutrition and lack of exercise are factored in as main causes of diabetes.

Why nuts are good

Go nuts with nuts

Nuts are good for the heart, say researchers from Harvard Medical School and the Harvard School of Public Health.

According to the study, healthy men and those who have already suffered a heart attack can reduce their risks by eating nuts regularly.

Researchers hypothesize that:

- Nuts contain arginine and polyunsaturated fats known to benefit the heart.
- The omega-3 fats found in walnuts may protect against irregular heart rhythms.
- Nuts are rich in arginine, a substance that may improve blood vessel function.
- Other nutrients in nuts (such as fiber and other vitamins) may also help lower cardiovascular risk.

By chemistries, nuts seem to produce modest declines in cholesterol, but when combined with other healthful foods, the results can be dramatic.

Breakfast and good grades

Breakfast is good for school-aged kids

Children who consistently eat breakfast have better nutritional profiles and have better memory, test grades and school attendance than those who skip breakfast, shows a study by a group of University of Florida researchers.

The study also found that breakfast eaters are generally less likely to be overweight despite the fact that they consume more calories each day.

Children' cities may predict cardiac death risk

A simple analysis of babies' cries can provide a better understanding of their neurological and medical status, researchers say.

In a review in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, researchers looked at previous studies that analyzed the acoustics of a baby's cry. Researchers found that high resistance and changes in the cry made were consistent markers associated with sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Pneumonia is the characteristic of a smooth, fullness and depth that helps humans distinguish a C note on a piano versus a guitar, while mode changes are every less fun-sounding cries that indicate poor neural control of the vocal tract.

Resonance is better identified by a computerized analysis of the cry signal than by human perception.

Autism and fatherhood

Autistic kids benefit from dads' involvement

According to a study published in the Nursing Research, a father's intervention with his autistic child is a home setting can increase the child's number of intelligible vocabulary by more than 16 percent.

Why yogurt is good for you

- One eight-ounce cup of plain, low-fat yogurt provides around 400 mg of calcium, more than the 300 mg in an eight-ounce glass of milk.
- Yogurt has as much potassium as a banana and as much protein as a eggs or ounce of meat.
- The live bacteria in yogurt help in digestion and protect you against other harmful bacteria.

'Let the sunshine in?'

DISCOVER

Maxene Santos Badion

"HERE comes the sun/And I say, it's all right..." The Beatles sang these lines decades ago and now current researchers are singing along with them. Recent studies have suggested that vitamin D could play an important role in not just preventing but also treating several types of cancers.

Small Phase 2 clinical studies done in 1998 and 2003 suggest that 1,25(OH)2D3, an active form of vitamin D, can slow the development of advanced prostate cancer. Studies involving colorectal cancer have also demonstrated that vitamin D can help protect against the development of the disease.

Ways to get vitamin D

There are several ways to get vitamin D. Drinking milk is probably the first thing that comes to mind. Staying in the sun for several minutes is another easy though with all the warnings about skin cancer, is probably not the idea most dermatologists would come up with first. Sunlight provides exposure to UVB, which, along with shellfish, fish and supplements such as cholecalciferol, are the main sources of vitamin D for humans. Unlike here, the form of vitamin D derived from external sources are then be converted into 25(OH)D3 and 1,25(OH)2D3.

But sunshine as a means of getting one's daily dose of vitamin D is now being advocated by several researchers, among them Michael Holick of the Department of Nutrition at the Boston University Medical Center and Edward Giovannucci of the Departments of Medicine and Nutrition at Harvard University.

Dependent on several factors

To be fair, pro-sunshine researchers aren't suggesting that people stay out in the sun for hours without protection. UVA exposure is dependent on several factors: geographical location; outdoor exposure—how long and what time of day; skin pigmentation; and weight.

In an interview posted Jan. 3 of this year on the website http://vitamindcouncil.com, Michael Holick, whose book "The UV Advantage" was published last year, says that Canadians in London in the summer, which is "much further south than are are in the United States, about 30 degrees further north in latitude, so the sun's rays are even weaker, ... probably would need a good 30 to 60 minutes of exposure of arms and legs, or hands face and arms, 2-3 times per week." The emphasis is on full tans, on the other hand, naturally protects him against UV rays for several minutes, so he would need to stay out in the sun for a much longer period of time in order for USA rays from the sun to produce vitamin D in the body.

Higher intakes of vitamin D

In the other hand, when Grassweiner, who has similar beliefs, spoke at the American Association for Cancer Research's (AACR) annual meeting held in Anaheim, California last month, he made it clear from the beginning that he had no such financial incentives that might suggest a bias in his work.

According to Giovannucci, based on recent studies that he reviewed in the March issue of the journal Cancer Causes and Control, people should consume 1,000 IU of vitamin D3 daily, though the ideal amount has yet to be determined. "If we really tell people to avoid sun exposure," he said, "and if the vitamin D hypothesis is true, then maybe we really need to consider much higher intakes of vitamin D." If people don't go out in the sun, he added, they may need to ingest as much as 2,000 IUs.

"Sun, sun, sun, here it comes..."

Recent research on the sun's rays that sunlight could help prevent cancers has been raised. In his talk, Giovannucci noted that the risks of several deaths in the United States caused by sun-digestive or female reproductive cancers is melanoma and other skin cancers is 10-1, suggesting the benefits may far outweigh the risks.

"Probably no other inexpensive nontoxic intervention has the potential to prevent as many cancer deaths as vitamin D, so studies of this hypothesis should be a high priority," he concluded, calling for studies on, among other things, the effects of vitamin D on female reproductive cancers and the "possible benefit of vitamin D in cancer incidence, mortality and maybe survival." Hopefully the public interest in this topic will inspire more researchers to look into this topic and provide more information.

* * *

E-mail the author at tsalazar@inquirer.com

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SATURDAY, MAY 28, 2005

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SPORTS

A1

Edna Tadiyan S. Melendres

Ultron
The Ultimate Release from Engine Stress. Pure Petron.

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WHAT'S INSIDE

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■ Pagulayan, Bustamante rout foes /A27

■ Old bitter rivals join hands to fuel Heat /A26

Davadilla tops lap, grabs overall lead

WARREN Davadilla (right) of Cafe 43 shadows Mayor Tanggilig of PLET in the sixth lap en route to Tagaytay City via Talisay, three kilometers to the finish.

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TAGAYTAY CITY—Former champion Warren Davadilla regained what could be the most difficult lap outside of the Baguio stages but visibly with help from last year's winner Rhyan Tanggilig, who graciously gave way to the final 50 meters in yesterday's Stage 2 of the Golden Tour 50@55 here.

The stage victory gave Davadilla, Cafe 43 aspirant, the yellow jersey going into today's Stage 3 from Nac Nac, Batangas, and then back here, but not before a grueling race was forward on Tanggilig, the PLET skipper, who claimed he's out of shape but certainly didn't look it.

For the stage triumph, Davadilla clocked two hours, 40 minutes and three seconds, the same time as Tanggilig, who is only one runner and 51 seconds behind him in the overall race.

They were both the 1-2 punches in the stage and overall results, relegating first stage winner Jerry Bottcellini (Coach Mobile) to fourth place. Alvin Bernas also of Coach Mobile and Fernando Hugnacio of Metro Grip occupy the third and fifth places overall, respectively.

While a visible upset, Davadilla crossed the line atop the People's Park in the Sky Tanggilig was still a picture of restrained power, trailing him by half a bike in the stage which featured the steep climbs of the newly introduced mountainside route known here as "Tanggay."

"I just had a good night's sleep," said Tanggilig, who last Thursday claimed he was still out of shape. But his strong performance belied the statement as he made his presence felt throughout the 91.00-kilometer stage from Lucena City.

This early pundits are betting on the come-from-behind 20 year old who might be using a spiky first name for him the 2004 Tour Filipinas stores. Last year he stalked the leaders throughout before pouncing on them in the climbing stages of Baguio to take the yellow jersey for good.

"I just saw an opportunity to keep up with them," quipped Tanggilig. "But the stage win is really for Warren, he worked long and hard for it."

But Davadilla, seated beside Tanggilig in the post-stage interview, quickly refuted it. "Wala sa tamako ahead si, he's strong," said the 30-year old 1998 Centennial Tour champ.

The finish line was some 10 meters away from the last of the seamless hairpin curves where Tanggilig held back as Davadilla furiously pumped it up to take the P10,000 stage prize aside from the P30,000 from Mayor Bambol Tolentino.

For Aztec, Mario Vergara took refuge with the third group since of the way before putting himself into the lead pack entering Talisay and edging Davadilla, Department of Tourism's Oscar Serafide, Guerrero Brandy's Danny Cosigan going up the 10-kilometer climbing finale in Talisay town.

The climb, which according to race manager Peking Dino falls under category 1, was certainly a hike of only 3%5 meters but involved countless series of hilly and abrupt elbow turns.

"It presents me from changing gear," said Davadilla of the terrain used for the first time in the 50 years of the Tour.

From Lucena City, the peloton sets to gun to break at the traffic-jammed streets of Alaminos, Laguna, allowing Cosigan, Serafide and Bolizon to launch up front, but by the time they passed Tanauan, Davadilla and Tanggilig were already riding strongly to make their move.

Going up, Cosigan briefly held the pole, while Davadilla and Serafide gave chase. Less than 100 meters behind were Bottcellini, Tourism's Oscar Hualda and Tanggilig.

Serafide got it for ten, Cosigan's leg gave up and soon Davadilla and Tanggilig were left to take the lead.

New direction for RP basketball to be charted in POC meet today

COJUANGCO not to set the sport's concerns.

By Marang B. Castillo

THE PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee will meet with the basketball community tomorrow noon and will try to identify the concerns of the sport first before meeting the people who will occupy sensitive positions.

Representatives from the professional PBA, the PBL, the UAAP and the NCAA are expected to attend, together with other league players in the game, as POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco's confidence.

Meanwhile, Cojuangco yesterday formalized the appointment of Go Teng Kok as the POC representative to the organizing committee of the Fiba-Asia Champion's Cup set to start tomorrow at the Araneta Coliseum.

"We need to identify the concerns of the sport first [with the various representatives] before Mr. Cojuangco names people to certain posts," said Cojuangco spokesman Joey Romasanta.

"I'm sure he has the names [of candi-

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'STOP CARDONA!'

Kornets, Portmasters dispute last semis slot

TAKE Mac Cardona out of Harbour Centre's offensive equation.

It's the strategy small Air Tan will stick to once again when the Sunny Goose Sweets battle the Portmasters for the remaining semifinal berth in the PBL Unity Cup today at the Blue Eagle Gym in Ateneo.

With Cardona disabled, Sweets Goose forged a landmark inside after slipping past Harbour Centre, 76-70, in their quarterfinal game last Thursday.

"That was our game plan," said Tan after the Sweets stably frustrated the league's top scorer. "We didn't want Cardona to score especially in the fourth quarter."

The winner of the 5:30 p.m. duel will join Shoemate Shoesaleng, Wildcats and defending champion Magnolia Ice Cream in the Final Four.

Outfoxed Centro swept in two games against Granny Goose in the elimination round, with Cardona drilling a combined-best 53 points in both encounters.

But Tan made sure there would be no more Cardona show in the Kornets gamepl up on the popular guard, limiting him to only two free throws in the second half and forcing him to commit five turnovers.

"We have to tighten our defense, especially as Cardona, to win," said Tan as the Kornets vie for their second straight semifinal appearance. "If we allow Cardona to do his usual thing in the game, we will be in trouble. We want our game to be a fast one. And we want to get the rebounds."

Another Harbour Centre setback would lead to a disappointing exit for the perennial powhouse that had only twice in the eliminations.

The Portmasters were had a chance to gain outright entry to the semifinals, but fell to Wildcats in overtime, 92-87, in their Tuesday playoff.

But expect them to call some bounty on Cardona, who averages 22.9 points, assist leader Lil Tolentino, Cuddy Espinas and Jessbert Mendoza.

Granny Goose, though, has shown that it can pull enough spunch since beating heavyweights Shoemate and Pelicans in the regular round with Ili Quibuyen, Chris Lanete, Art Lumanlan and Ally Jimenez at the helm. Antonino M. Popo

CHRISTIAN Corneal of Toyota City drives past Joel Co of Magnolia in the game Thursday.

Once more with feeling: PBA 'greats' turn back hands of time tonight

JAWORSKI

DALUPAN

CO

LIM

GOVERNOR Schwarzenegger played fulltime when he took Francis Arnaiz out of today's Greatest Game by giving the former Toyota team MVP a major appointment in his California office.

But boxoffice joy is in store for cage devotees today when the Robert Jaworski-coached "Big Greats give coach Virgilio "Baby" Dalupan's legends a run for their money at the Araneta Coliseum.

This reenactment of Havlicek and Dalupan contests by aroundbasketball fans a very memorable and enjoyable evening when the two teams battle each other at 7:30 p.m. in today's "Greatest Game" to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the pro league.

Nimrik bagged off as the last minute hirsuite of teams against most glare time by Califerniz Governor Schwarzenegger for whom he has been working," Jaworski's hit auditioner during yesterday's SUGBOP in Kamayan.

"Unang-Hirsuteria, on the other hand, could be in suffering from great. Anyang. Ano'they have already been issued their tickets and ready to fly to Manila."

"But I don't think the absence of the two will diminish the Greats' strength," the PBA commissioner added. "I saw the team practice last Monday and it is still very competitive."

"Tommy Jaworski's buddies calling the shots in the bench also promised replay and so is Moe Dumaliksol, who arrived from Cebu today."

Dalupan, now 82, predicts today's duel could turn out to be more exciting than the Crispa-Toyota game two years ago, when the former Tanduay ace, handled by Jimmy Silverio and starting Jaworski and Fernandez, upended the Red Enforcers of Arsy Cervo and Philip Cezar.

Dalupan, who has lost ample time to prepare his squad, said the Greats have an advantage in quickness having the still-active Johnny Abarrientos, acknowledged as the finest point guard today, and teammate Fernandez in the lineup.

But he quickly added that the legendary cagers will have their chance showing up with retired Ginebra stars Allan Caidic, Bogs Adornado, Co, Alvin Patrimonio and Freddie Hubalde at the forefront of his team's offensive mission.

"Sabi ko nga sa kanila, mag-ehersisyo sila nang mga isang oras, para kahit paano pawisan. Alam naman nila na hindi ito basta-basta, but they must convert as they would be taken out," quipped Dalupan, the country's winningest coach with 31 championships.

With Patrimonio, who was also at the session, and Jerry Codiñera manning the slot, the legends also appear to have an edge on the paint.

Incidentally, eight ex-Gilagers in 10-man roster had, at one time, played under the "Maestro." They are Co, Caidic, Adornado and Hubalde at Crispa, Caidic at Great Taste and Pembrook, Codiñera and Jojo Lastimosa at Pepsi-Mobiline. All but Lastimosa will be on active duty tonight's tussles.

The subdivisional of Arnaiz and Patrimonio reckoned to only "20 in seventh's fantasy, attach includes Jojo Lastimosa, Alex Jamero and Dennis Espino, Sunday Line, Pearlmore also of the session, Ato Agustin, Bonjie Bona, Nonoi Maganes, Manny Pinto and Lim Eng Beng.

SAN MIGUEL Beer's Dondon Hontiveros is fouled on the drive by Purefoods's Anthony Miller in the game last night.

Pals nip Kings, grab outright semis berth

By Jane Navarro

NELLIE Miller buried a short stab off the glass and lifted Talk 'N Text to a pulsating 103-100 victory over Barangay Ginebra and gave the Phone Pals an outright semifinal berth in the Dram Miniature PBA Fiesta Conference last night at Ynares Center in Antipolo.

Miller's basket off Rodney Santos and Mark Caguioa gave Talk 'N Text the No. 1 slot in the tournament with its 12th win in 18 games.

San Miguel and Alaska, which ended up tied at 11-7, will dispute the second outright berth.

The Sarsosas assisted their 11th victory behind the heroics of new acquisition Francis Arnaiz in the first game, routing the Pedita Pajarera, 110-78.

Miller's basket came after Rodney Santos completed a three-point play that pushed the Phone Pals a point back, 99-100, 38 seconds remaining.

The Kings actually took the lead inside the final two minutes on four straight points by Andy Seigle, before Miller completed a three-point play that made it 99-97 in favor of the Phone Pals, 30 seconds remaining.

Ginebra dropped to 8-10 and tumbled the No. 7 slot, emerging a one-to-one affair against Nos. 8 and 9 (8-9).

The loser of the San Miguel-Alaska playoff will fall to No. 3 and take on No. 10 Coca-Cola around with the winner to have advantage.

Sta. Lucia, with a 10-8 record, took the No. 4 slot and will face No. 9 Shell (7-11) after with a twice-to-beat edge.

Pedita dropped to No. 5 with a 9-9 slate and will challenge No. 8 Purefoods (7-11) in a best-of-three series.

Signed up the other day, Arnaiz scored 30 points off the bench to lift the Sarsosas.

The Scores

First Game

GINEBRA (88)—Asaba 0, Ivanovic 21, Antonio 11, Fabian 0, Slaats 15, Bolera 0, Seigle 8, Abott 9, Cuyet 2, Pinpin 10, Slaats 11, Bolera 0, Cardona 0.

TEXT (103)—Miller 31, Slaats 11, Santos 17, Tenorio 10, Arnaiz 8, Arnaiz 0, Abbarrientos 0, Cruz 0, Campos 2, Pingol 5, Villanueva 2, Slaats 11, Bolera 0, Cardona 0.

Quarters: 1st 31, 2nd 42, 3rd 68, 4th 99

Second Game

ALASKA (110)—Arnaiz 30, Miller 31, Cruz 12, Aquino 10, Pinto 10, Alaban 7, Flores 2, Carey 2, De Guzman 2 and 0, Dandan 0.

SARSOSAS (78)—Capacio 18, Santos 19, Arnaiz 30, Tuble 11, Seigle 0, Cardona 0, Tabacon 0, Dimaranan 0, Reese 0.

Quarters: 1st 31, 2nd 42, 3rd 67, 4th 110

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Saturday, May 26, 2001

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Kris Aquino visits and roots for James Yap

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

Hiba-Asia secretary general Yeoh Choo Hock, now in Manila to attend the opening of the Hiba-Asia Championship Cup, reportedly met with Manila petroleum Go Teng Arce as an undisclosed place yesterday.

While we all know what the main topic of the meeting was going to be, we are held in suspense as to what Dato Yeoh will have to say regarding the suspension of the BAP by the POC.

The big question of course is: Will Hiba-Asia, under the leadership of president Sheikh Syed Ibb Al Albhani, continue to recognize the suspended BAP as the basketball governing body of the Philippines?

A veteran colleague posed that question of mine to "look the other day via an overseas phone call, even before he could get to Manila.

This is the yet publicly brushed off.

Dato Yeoh said that, while he is here in Manila, he will concentrate on the event and finish it, before he goes on the big problems.

But Yeoh did say something about a solution being the best present for the Filipinos. "I couldn't figure out what he was trying to say," said the scribe.

Well I hope Yeoh and Sheikh Syed have the Ibbsmessic wisdom to find an acceptable resolution (for all) to the chaos currently plaguing Philippine basketball.

As to the meeting yesterday between the Dato and COA, my friend says he thinks nothing really big would be accomplished by the talks.

"Pamahiin siguro, pagkatapos kong sinabi 'yun, ayun na," said Kris Aquino, the BAP secretary general on yesterday's meeting kabuhayan," he said.

Personally, I would consider it a big accomplishment if Dato Yeoh succeeds in getting the two to smoke the peace pipe.

• • •

Speaking of a letter sent by lawyer Paul Lucas of Talk 'N Text to PBA Commissioner Noli Eala who was being asked to explain why Brad Daugherty was tapped to sponsor an event in the PBA's 30th anniversary celebration.

Believe me, the Purefoods franchise is demanding that Eala desist from promoting the sponsorship of Brad Daugherty.

"Should you fail to honor this demand, we shall institute the necessary legal actions to protect the interest of the Talk 'N Text franchise and we shall hold you personally responsible for all the damages suffered by the TNT franchise as a result of your wanton and malicious disregard of the rights of the Talk 'N Text franchise.

Whew! This on top of the contempt charges awaiting decision in the Quezon City regional trial court.

• • •

The Philippine Basketball League is moving to a new home soon.

According to PBL Commissioner Chito Trinidad, the league has been given until June 4 by Makati Vice Mayor Ernesto Mercado to vacate their office at the Makati Coliseum which will be transformed into a multi-lighting arena.

Interconnection of the venue started yesterday, the day following the PBA doubleheader between Manila and Purefoods in the first game and Coke and Welcoat in the second.

"We're still looking for a place to transfer," said Chito who was doing the rounds of prospective venues in the area. "Otherwise, we will be holding office in Inn-Joan on a temporary basis. The games go on as scheduled."

• • •

Guess who was at the Ynig Gym yesterday afternoon to witness the action between the BP team and defending Filoil-Shell Champions Cup champion Red Bull Barako of Quezon?

Kris Aquino, that's who. My spotter said she was there to root for James Yap, even if it was only a practice game.

As of press time, she was still there, long after the game had been concluded.

"She was obviously waiting for James," said my informant.

Al Reyes was top 7 points, 10-10.

"We could've beaten them if not for their imports," said BP coach Chot Reyes.

Farrales, G'zales forge title clash

Ilagan stuns Papa to book semis slot

By Jong Rivano

GEN. TRIAS, Cavite—Leanna Farrales caused a pressure-packed four-hour gun for par on the 18th to secure a 1-up victory over top seed Victor Guzlo yesterday and arrange a showdown with Katrina Gonzales for the ladies title in the inaugural National Tournament of Club Champions at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club course here.

The fifth-seeded Farrales, the Globe executive representing Nick Mack, made the par after southpaw Shihong Sui Guzlo fish a birdie to force almost the same distance on the last hole of the format round that could have extended the match.

Farrales's Gonzales gave no room to 15-year-old Kathleen Ayol Cebu Country Club on the way to a 6- and 2 win. She topped the victory with a birdie on the 16th hole to earn her expected place in the finals of the tournament presented by Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp. (HSBC) and by Asian Golf.

Farrales and Gonzales also secure all-expense paid trip to the HSBC World Ladies match Play in New Jersey in June, with the latter settling for the Omega Limited Philippine edition watch.

Ilagan ended the men's division quarterfinals with Henry Ilagan of Manila Southwoods beating out No. 1 seed John Papa of The Country Club, 2 up.

But the day belonged to Kevin Yuson of Sta. Elena who made the shot of the day on the 18th to finally end the bid of Eagle Ridge bet Bb Boong Back.

Yuson, seeded 12th, hit a gap wedge approach to within four feet from a rough lie in the left rough 125 yards out, then sank the putt for a birdie that got him past Bb, Lagg and into a semifinal showdown with Ilagan, a former national team player.

Topmost Ilagan of Riviera gave up against the Aurora's Jon Hidalgo in the other encounter.

Ilagan said a birdie riddled round to knock out No. 1 Ilagan Clarenville, 3-and-2, while Yuson won four of the first five holes in the back nine to clinch a 5- and-4 win over Oliver Gun-Cruz of Tagaytay Highlands.

Aside from Omega, the country's first ever double-duty of club championship is held in conjunction with the Golf Distributors Association of the Philippines, with Toyota Fortuna as the official vehicle, Philippine Airlines the official airline and Titleist the official ball.

The other sponsors are Pitter Power, Active Interiors, Global Club Homes, Mizuno, Nike Golf, Ayala Greenfield Estates, Coppertone Sport and Symbol Sports Drink.

The ladies final and the men's semifinals will be played at the Dye course, considered as one of the toughest courses in the country.

"It's really going to be a match play against the course for us," said Ilagan.

LEANNA Farrales tees her second shot on No. 17 The Week Watch champion cruised top seed Victor Guzlo, 1-up.

SSC, La Salle spikers dispute Shakey's lead

SAN Sebastian and La Salle lock horns today with no less than the solo lead in the Shakey's V-League on the line at the Rizal Coliseum.

Guarantee is 5 p.m. with both unbeaten teams try ing to extend four-game winning runs.

Tests all a first-set conquest of Ateneo on Thursday, edging Jem Sabayanan outs the offense of Cherry Rose Macatangay to post its first-seat in the Bridging league.

Meanwhile, Gril Cherie, a former for limbers an, has been the unsung hero for the Lady Stags.

While Macatangay peppered Ateneo with 32 kills Thursday Cherie' ch excellent set plays almost went unnoticed.

GAMES TODAY
(Rizal Coliseum)
5 p.m. — Ateneo vs. De La Salle
6:30 p.m. — San Sebastian vs. La Salle

The Lady Stags will be playing their second game in four days, while the Lady Archers, the reigning champs, are coming in both of a five-day break.

La Salle was relentless last week, scoring a 25-15, 25-20, 25-23 beating of Lyceum despite getting only five points from second conference MVP Michelle Carolino.

Defensive demon hopes to bounce back from inconsistent

host to DLSC when it battles Far Eastern in the first match at 3 p.m.

The Lady Eagles actually bungled a 2-1 set lead and crashed into Mapuanggay from delivering the goods in the stretch as they dropped to 2-2 in the standings.

Odds are low about even in the Ateneo-FEU series, though the Lady Tamaraws doubled up their first win on Thursday, 25-23, 16-25, 25-14, 17-25, 15-13, over Ateneo.

Ateneo is again expected to bank on frontliners Michelle Laborte, Jennifer Gamboa, and Lucille Tolentino.

Alaric Tristan S. Magno

Road Warriors move up with four top 20 finishes

TAGAYTAY CITY—Four Gaisano Brandy riders finished in the Top 20 in the second leg of the Fatsbay presented... Golden Tour Eagle's Rest Carnival City to this city as the Road Warriors jumped from sixth to third in the team rating.

Danny Gaisano shocked to catch for the lap, four minutes and 17 seconds behind winner Marvin Sarreal Ilo of Cole 45 in the punishing 93.109-km. ascent to put Gaisano in prime position for the team title.

From sixth after Thursday's initial stage, the Road Warriors moved within 2:16 minutes behind pace-setting Alter team Cole 45, which has a time of 20 hours and 47.294 seconds.

Angel Moreta, a member of last year's champion team, and rookie Mobil Sunbeams and Joel Dorlan overcame storage when the main peloton hit the climb to Tagaytay and accepted 17th to 19th places.

BONGBONG dishes of hardening (coconut wine) in different colors from the main patrons of riders in Tagaytay, Quezon. (CV VIDEO)

STAGE 2 RESULTS

1. M. Escalilla, DSLC 01, 2 hours 45 minutes 5 seconds
2. R. Tangalin, PLDT, same
3. B. Ramos, South Middle, 1 minute 10 seconds behind
4. S. Samudio, South Middle, 2:16 time
5. F. Magno, Metro Drug, 3:42
6. D. Enriquez, Guerrero Brandy, 3:47
7. R. Lopez JR., Metro Drug, 7:22
8. E. Pagdo, PLDT, 7:38
9. J. Alcabel, South Middle, 7:46
10. M. Mallorca-Ramos 'MS' Bel wo, 7:48
11. T. Alfonso, Metro Drug, same
12. S. Quintal, Sunbeam, same
13. J. Enriquez, MS Bikers, 7:52
14. C. Tangalin, Guerrero Brandy, 8:08
15. C. Ramos, Guerrero Brandy, same
16. J. Escalilla, Metro Drug, 8:10
17. M. Pelmeo, Cardrick, 8:39
18. R. Hizalde, Sunbeam, same
19. R. Mauricio, Cardrick, 9:02
20. D. Perez, Cole 45, 9:04
21. J. Delos, MS Bikers, 11:56
22. S. Miranda, Metro Drug, 12:23
23. B. Velasco, PLDT, same
24. L. Marcel, PLDT, same
25. M. Reyes, Cole 45, same
26. F. Bautista, Taft 84, same
27. R. Gervacio, Inc.P., 13:11
28. E. Quiñones, Cardrick, 12:32
29. S. Mabutas, Guerrero Brandy, same
30. R. Guerrero, Guerrero Brandy, 12:48
31. A. Ramos, Guerrero Brandy, same

OVERALL INDIVIDUAL RESULTS (after Stage 2)

1. M. Escalilla, Cole 45, 6 hours 13 minutes 29 seconds
2. R. Tangalin, PLDT, 1 minute 16 seconds behind
3. A. Ramos, South Middle, 3:08
4. S. Samudio, South Middle, 3:09
5. F. Magno, Metro Drug, 7:19
6. E. Lopez JR., Metro Drug, 7:28
7. M. Mallorca-Ramos, MS Bikers, 11:01
8. E. Quiñones, Cardrick, 12:32
9. R. Tangalin, Guerrero Brandy, 12:48
10. M. Pelmeo, Cardrick, 9:20
11. R. Hizalde, Sunbeam, same
12. S. Quintal, Sunbeam, 14:42
13. R. Mauricio, Cardrick, same
14. E. Enriquez, MS Bikers, 9:28
15. J. Escalilla, Cole 45, same
16. R. Gervacio, Inc.P., 13:38
17. M. Reyes, Cole 45, same
18. F. Bautista, Taft 84, same
19. J. Alcabel, South Middle, 9:57
20. S. Miranda, Metro Drug, same

OVERALL TEAM STANDINGS

1. Cole 45 (20 hours, 47.294 seconds)
2. Metro Drug (20:02:22), 35.0.7 seconds behind)
3. Guerrero Brandy (20:05:11.00)
4. Sunbeam (20:06:27.14) (20:20:00)
5. Cardrick (20:08:27.14) (20:20:00)
6. PLDT (20:08:28) (20:47:00:00)
7. South Middle (20:08:28.00) (20:47:00)
8. MS Bikers (20:08:28.00) (20:47:00)

Safin still hounded by 'curse'

PARIS... Marat Safin must think he's cursed at the French Open.

Last year it was blisters on both hands. On Thursday tendonitis in his left knee prompted him to call a trainer twice in the first set before he limped and hobbled past Czech qualifier Lukas Dlouhy 6-7 (6), 6-3, 7-5, 6-1.

"My knee bothers me more and more," Safin said. "It really hurts, especially when I serve. I cannot put the weight on one leg, the left one."

The pain first took hold in the fourth set of the opening set. The tall Russian, seeded third, jumped for a routine smash he could easily have retrieved standing.

After landing awkwardly he stood motionless for a few seconds, leaning forward with both hands on his thighs as the crowd at Court No. 1 clapped and cheered for the reigning Australian Open champion to continue.

As the changeover, Safin received a massage from the trainer. He'd already received treatment four games earlier.

His next match, against 2000 French Open champ Juan Carlos Ferrero, is likely to test the knee even more.

"I'll get a treatment (Friday) morning, afternoon, take some pills, some painkillers, and try and go out and play against Ferrero. I will see," he said.

Safin is willing to leave the past against Ferrero...and even satellite Bratislava...to clear his goal of adding the French Open to his US and Australian Open titles.

"I will definitely come out on the court and play against him," he said. AP

HAAA! Safin, playing in pain, performs a little stunt for the crowd, hitting the ball between his legs in an attempt to return to Czech foe Lukas Dlouhy during their second-round match in the French Open.

FRENCH OPEN

Roddick cr Sharapova,

PARIS—Andy Roddick failed to make it through the opening week at the French Open for the fifth time in as many tries, blowing a two-set advantage Thursday and a fifth-set lead against Argentine Jose Acasuso.

Roddick was broken twice after going ahead 5-1 in the last set and lost, 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (3), 7-6.

"I thought I had the better of him for the latter part of three sets," Roddick said. "Unfortunately, the better part of three sets and three sets is something different."

Roddick's career record at Roland Garros fell to 4-5. He lost shooting was his first appearance in 2001, when he reached the third round.

The quintessential clay-court marathon began in 80-degree Celsius heat and ended 3 hours, 23 minutes later on a cloudy but soggy evening. Both weary players required leg massages from a trainer during fifth-set changeovers, Acasuso to his left thigh and Roddick to both calves.

Roddick tried various tactics on Acasuso, sometimes all three techniques in succession to receive curses and then hitting two mouthfull backhands. The second landed short, and Acasuso slammed a forehand winner.

Was Roddick attempting to lure Acasuso into coming for net result?

"Maybe I was trying to get him to pull the trigger," Roddick said. "I didn't get all of one and hit it short, and that was it."

ANDY Roddick suffers another

When Acasuso delivered the blow, he sank to the court on his haunches and jubilation. Roddick near the net to shake hands.

"It's a five-set match," Acasuso said after the match. "I'm very satisfied."

For the second year in a row the second time at a Grand Slam more than 30 years—an Argentinian made it out of the second Blake and Vince Spadea also lost.

"It stinks," Roddick said. "I don't of us are happy. We all have a and it has grown older down a lo

Sorenstam stalks Corning leaders

CORNING, New York—Defending champion Annika Sorenstam opened with a 5-under 66 before storm forced play 66 to tie Sophie Gustafson for the first round lead of the Corning Classic on Thursday.

"It was tricky out there with the wind and the conditions," Sorenstam said. "It's tough to judge, especially when the greens are so small. It makes a big difference if you don't pick the right club. That's what happened to me on the first hole. If you don't have the right club, you end up on the wrong side of the pin, and that's how I wrote some unmakeable putts, and I had them."

Turner played in one of the final threesomes of the day to much improved conditions, and started quickly, making eagle on the par-5 second hole, and cooling there were birdies before the turn. She finished with her first round in the 60s this year to tie Gustafson, who shared with five birdies over her final seven holes on the way to her first round of the season.

Sorenstam was tied for third with 1998 Corning winner Meaghan Bolden, Catherine Cartwright, Annika Hallett, Shi Lee and South Korea's Jenie Kang.

Two weeks after dominating the Chick-fil-A Charity Championship, in which she played the first 36 holes of the tournament without a bogey, things changed quickly for Sorenstam. She made a double bogey on No. 10, three back another at the 13th to fall behind her playing partners, two-time Corning winner Rosie Jones and Christina Kim.

Sorenstam then got going, starting with an long-range eagle at the 12.9-yard, par-5 No. 14. She hit a 4-wood to within 7 feet of the pin to become the first player in the tournament's 27-year history to make the 4-wood green on the second shot. She then calmly made the short, scoring part to get back to even par.

Sorenstam finished with three straight pars, and they came when the wind seemed to subside.

"On my last hole I thought I was totally downwind, and by the time I got to the green it's left to right," she said, shaking her head. "I could have used three different clubs. You had to time it pretty well. It makes it difficult."

Gustafson missed the cut two weeks ago in the Chick-fil-A Charity Championship, which Sorenstam dominated for her 40th career victory and her only round in the 60s this year came a month ago on the first round of the Takefag Classic.

On this day, even as tricky wind that often befuddled Sorenstam didn't seem to faze as rounds of an effort on Gustafson. She said her fellow Swede with an 8-foot birdie putt in the par-4 12th hole, the most difficult on the front and four on Corning Country Club course.

Gustafson followed with three straight birdies, capping her impressive string with a 10-foot putt at 17.

"You've got to be aggressive here," said Gustafson, who needed only 28 putts on the round, seven fewer than Sorenstam. "I had a couple of bogeys where I wasn't really sure where the wind was coming from."

Turner said she wasn't so bad for those who tied off in the afternoon. Having a tough challenger on Friday Turner, the 1988 Corning champion, was initially unaware of making only her second cut in five tournaments. Her best finish this season is a tie for 5 for in last week's Jerbaur Classic.

Rosie Touchstone, a 15-year-old American, the youngest player to ever qualify on Corning, shot a 1-over 73 and was in contention to make the cut. AP

ANNIKA Sorenstam is once again one the top of the leaderboard.

Indy's 'Ice Princess' critics: Car can't te

SACRAMENTO, California—Before this, her first season in Indy cars, Danica Patrick earned all she got but giggles, beauty competing in the minor leagues of motor sports.

Upon her promotion as the elite Indy Racing League, she strutted her stuff, top 10 list, in honor of her more beer and six moves really about Danica Sorenstam.

"No. 1, the best thing about being Danica is I get to go really, really fast."

And just days before the biggest race of her young career, she appeared completely at ease on Letterman's late night show, confessing good natured jokes.

But on the mention, she's no joke. Set Sunday to become the fourth woman to drive in motor sports' glamour event, the Indianapolis 500, Patrick entered her as rookie nickname, "The Ice Princess," for a chilly personality that's all business on the track.

And with a hot car, a solid team and some qualifying times, Patrick just might do it.

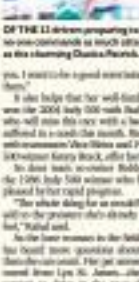
"What's to land about 227 miles per hour?" she asked after posting a qualifying speed of 227.600 mph. "The faster you go, the easier it gets."

Patrick will start fourth in Sunday's field of 33. A little wiggle going into a turn cost her the first position on the starting line, but her quick recovery earned her more respect. Driving the No. 26 car for Kuhel Motorsports Racing, the 23-year-old rookie appears poised to make Indy history.

"In 89 years, only four women have come through (and) qualified for the Indy 500," Patrick noted. "We can remember the names of every woman, who can remember every guy? Not everyone can remember the winners. That's why I want to win."

Coupled with her photogenic looks, her success in qualifying has made Patrick the most exciting force on the race. The 5-foot-3 Patrick has become a favorite among fans.

"I actually think all the distractions are good. It keeps me hungry, keeps me fiery. It sure helps when the fans are cheering for



OF THE 11 drivers preparing to

me, I want to be signed autographs there."

So she hope that her well-fin over the 2004 Indy 500 with that who will miss this race with a b suffered in a crash the month. B and teammates Alex Barron and J 500 winner Sarah Fisher, after bo joined by her rapid progress.

"The whole thing for an unsuit add to the pressure she's already feel," Rahal said.

So in the next moments to the finis he heard more questions about them she can stand. He got answ sound from Lyn St. James...she worked to drive in the race. "I doesn't matter the differences."

In a sport in which a small means more weight can go into the performance may be an advantag

"I'm closer to the steering she said. "But I've been told

Ex-British Open champ finds old form

VIRGINIA WATER, England...Steve Elkington had nothing but frustration on the Us Tour this year.

On Thursday, in the country of his greatest success, the 2003 British Open champion had a round he has not been able to produce at home in the past four months.

His 4-under 68, capped by an eagle three at the 18th, in the first round of the BMW Championship left him one shot off the lead.

Caddie out at home had included eight missed cuts in succession, and none in 15 US Tour events.

"It was everything really, especially the driving," Curtis said Thursday.

Curtis' nit began in the fifth round of the Bob Hope Classic, where he was well placed until he shot a 76.

Since the Hope, it just went downhill and gradually got worse and worse," he said. "I was working hard but I think I was working on the wrong things. It just got more and more frustrating, but the last three or four weeks have been a lot better.

"I think every pro goes through it at one time in their career when they struggle. I'm not saying my goals. I'm just going out and trying to get better, and if that means I finish 40th, so be it.

"It's better than not playing at all."

Colin Montgomerie knows what it's like to be this things.

The 42-year-old Scot, who won this tournament from 1998-2000 when it was called the British PGA Championship, is equal 13th after he shot a 1-under 71 in the first round.

"I was more confident then, more confident on the course than I am now," Montgomerie said. "I know I was going to win somehow." AP

LIVERPOOL players (left to right) Jamie Carragher, Luis Garcia, Vladimir Smicer, Milan Baros, Steven Gerrard and John Arne Riise hold up the Champion's League trophy.

Liverpool parade draws more than half

LIVERPOOL, England...More than half a million fans jammed the streets and squares of Liverpool on Thursday evening to welcome their soccer team home after its dramatic victory in Europe's biggest club competition.

Cheering crowds estimated by police at 750,000 came out for a parade celebrating Liverpool's penalty-shoot-out win over AC Milan in the Champions League final Wednesday night in Istanbul, Turkey, the storied club's fifth European title and first in 21 years.

Manager Rafa Benitez, captain Steven Gerrard and the rest of the team traveled through the city with the trophy in an open-topped, double-decker bus. Fans wearing the club's red colors perched from lamp posts, traffic lights, bus shelters and rooftops to get a better view, and sang the team's anthem, "You'll Never Walk Alone."

"Seeing these smiling faces is the greatest pleasure," Benitez said. "They have been inspirational all season. They have been our 12th man and behaved perfectly in Istanbul. I cannot find our fans are the best in England. Now I know they are the best in Europe, too."

The bus, led by 20 mounted police officers, was escorted with a huge banner depicting the club's five European trophies. It took more than two hours for the bus to wind its way through the huge crowds, stopping briefly at the club's football stadium and concluding the parade at St. George's Hall, where an estimated 300,000 people were waiting.

"I said we would bring the cup back for those fans, and now we have done it," Gerrard said.

Gerrard and Benitez had earlier
huge silver cup together as they got off the plan
as John Lennon played following the flig
home from Turkey.

"Unbelievable. Incredible. Brilliant. T
whole country is very proud of you," Prime Mi
over from Mali and in a message to thousands a
his players.

Queen Elizabeth II learned of the result both
receiving from an official visit to Canada.

"Congratulations on your remarkable win in

ashes out in upset; , Mauresmo advance

MARIA Sharapova falls to the ground after chasing a shot by France's Amelie Mauresmo. The Russian ousted previous adversary for the next round and to set a collision course with Serena No. 1 partner Venus Williams.

' tells gender ell difference

Wimbledon's balls under discussion

HEWAH

New direction...

Richest darts contest slated

a million fans

Old bitter rivals join hands to fuel Heat

MIAMI — They were once bitter rivals, sharing nothing but disdain for the other.

From the moment Shaquille O'Neal was the No. 1 pick in the 1992 NBA Draft, one spot ahead of Alonzo Mourning, the pair have been linked and the relationship was never good. O'Neal once wanted to fight Mourning, in fact, Mourning questioned if O'Neal had any true basketball skill.

But their marriage at Miami reservations has gone splendidly, with the two becoming fast friends because of a shared goal — delivering the Heat's first NBA championship.

"Oh and I both want the same thing," O'Neal said. "We want to get it done."

In the Eastern Conference finals against Detroit, a loss of seven series now (and at a game apiece, O'Neal and Mourning have unanimously been pointed on the roster — although both are current. While playing alongside O'Neal, Mourning moves to power forward.

"It'll be a little more challenging for opposite centers now to do the same together," Mourning said. "If they go pass me, then they've got to run balls. If they go pass him, then they've got to worry me."

Both teams took Thursday off. Game 3 in Detroit is Sunday on the Pistons' home floor.

Late in Miami's 92-86 win in Game 2 of the series on Wednesday night, Mourning proved invaluable, especially on the defensive end. He played eight minutes in the final quarter, of fiddly being credited in that time with two blocks; he appeared to warrant a third when Ben Wallace missed a dunk with 4:51 left.

Another Wallace shot was blocked by Mourning with 1:45 left, this one setting up Dwyane Wade for a layup that put Miami ahead, 83-78. And Wallace tried to run over Mourning's screen on Miami's next possession, knocking Mourning to the floor. Nevertheless, he made both and put the Heat up by seven.

Mourning's end-of-game numbers seemed modest: 22 minutes, six points, four blocks, two rebounds. But O'Neal himself is very prone to Mourning's direction after the game.

"He's definitely playing well, playing hard, blocking shots, playing good defense," said O'Neal, who had 27 points and 13 rebounds in Game 2. "It was great. He had my back a couple times, couple times I really couldn't get to the rebound because I was trying to hold Ben Wallace off."

Some of Detroit's players, including Chauncey Billups and Rasheed Wallace, said they didn't think the O'Neal-Mourning pairing bothered much. But Detroit coach Larry Brown was a bit more complimentary.

"I'm, everybody hopes how good he is. But they did a good job," Brown said Wednesday night. "Defensively they forced us a little outside. They challenged shots, they did a lot of good things."

Mourning, who still takes numerous medications for his kidney disease and the nutrient transplant, said he's willing to play as much as Miami needs — especially with O'Neal still downed by a bruised right thigh.

"It ain't time to somewhere nothing right now. It's winning time," Mourning said. "I can go 15-20 [minutes]. Sometimes I only have to be out there for two minutes, but they can't say I'm not out there. You can do what you have to do."

When the Heat re-signed Mourning in a free agent late in the regular season, many wondered if Shaq and Zo could successfully coexist. The answer was a resounding "yes."

On Tuesday, O'Neal picked up Mourning, and the two took blinks on a pep talk disguised as a prayer.

They stressed how important Wade was to Miami's championship chances, how he should simply be more what he was beating about the way he played in the Heat's Game 1 loss. On that next Wade's spirits soaring: he dropped 48 points on the Pistons in Game 2.

"I have to guys who have been doing it for years," O'Neal said. "And I just try to score out intimate chest proof."

NEWSDAYS, former rivals and current Miami Heat teammates Shaquille O'Neal (33/left) and Alonzo Mourning are watching out for each other's back.

National athletes back 'Ninong' FG

MORE than 200 national athletes and coaches from 13 national sports associations (NSAs) have manifested their support and gratitude to Independent First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, whom they consider the "Godfather of Philippine Sports" in an open letter circulated at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

Among those who signed the letter stating that all of Arroyo's local sports are gymnasts Joel Soriano), Phoebe Bojindo and Dennis de Guzman, marathoner Allan Balbuena), weight lifters Arsenio Ting, Jesse Caballes and Wilfredo Ledesma, javelin thrower Nestory Quiñones and archers Abigail Tinsingan and Ed Mendoza Pregnal.

The other athletes, who are among the 1,500 preparing for the 23rd Southeast Asian Games set here from 27 to Dec. 3, name from basketball, archery athletics, aerobic, wrestling, petanque, chess, boxing, gymnastics, rowing, judo, water polo, fencing and shooting.

The letter recognizes the big boost from the sports programs of Arroyo in 2005. (May at Sapote, as Mayong Filipino) and this year (Mendoyong Cano, May Lubao Jose). The first tournament, the billet acknowledges, has added the private sector to raise funds for the allowances and training of athletes preparing for the SEA Games.

According to the letter, the program of Arroyo proved to be the most successful cooperative between the government sports arms (Philippine Sports Commission) and the private sector.

"This unprecedented show of support by the First Gentleman provided the much needed boost for our athletes and coaches to push themselves over the limit to ensure our best performance for the SEA Games," the letter adds.

Through Mr. Arroyo, the private sector now serves as the "godfather" or "ninong" to one or more disciplines.

The athletes entered their goals, lads in the 90s and call for an end to the "unbounded rivalries against Mayong Mike Yilmaz who call on "our Mayong Mike to either get on his mission to take the endgame for Team Philippines."

CHAMPIONS! MVP3 doubles Larry C. champion Terrence Ely and Roland Go receive their prizes from Fred Epling of the Formula Sport's Plaza after a badminton tournament held recently for the benefit of the Children's Wish. The tournament coincided with the 1st anniversary of Formula Sports Plaza.

GINOBILI

Ginobili becoming go-to guy of Spurs

SAN ANTONIO — The only things have been going for Argentine star Manu Ginobili and the San Antonio Spurs in this NBA playoffs lately are flying and double-pounds.

Back to the starting lineup after eight games as a super sub, Ginobili scored 29 points in Game 5 against the Supersonics, then in Game 6 whipped a passion Tim Duncan for the series-winning shot worth 0.5 seconds left. Ginobili capped the first quarter of Game 1 in Phoenix with a 52-foot bank shot, then guided a dominant 9-2 run in the final 6 minutes of Game 2.

"I just thought Ginobili was seamlessly spread," said Phoenix coach Mike D'Antoni, who of an star Ginobili wasn't a starter back 48 points against Phoenix during the regular season. "He's tough, he's smart, he's quick, he's got it all, and at big moments he plays big. Those are things you don't teach."

When Ginobili joined the Spurs three seasons ago, he was a backup and offense was an afterthought. That duo was all about defense and drills as well it won the championship.

But only have to coach Ginobili let a few minutes to source his energy and passion, in many ways, he's a bigger, left-handed version of Phoenix's Steve Nash — all the way to the length of Our hair.

Nash said of Ginobili: "I don't think he's the quickest guy in the league, but he's quick, he's skilled, he's unbelievably clever, he's super tough, and he's a gamer."

When Ginobili joined the Spurs three seasons ago, he was a backup and offense was an afterthought. That duo was all about defense and drills as well it won the championship.

Those days, the Spurs are two wins from returning to the NBA Finals and they can still play great defense. "The difference Ginobili is now is faster and, not so coincidentally, the Antonio offense is a lot more free to watch.

"He's so creative," Duncan said.

After three straight road games, the Spurs finally return home Saturday night and Monday night. While they will be intimately familiar to the one robot Ginobili's seven neck will be, the bigger crowd will invoke the fans.

Injured guard Jon Johnson practiced Thursday and said he expects to be in the Phoenix lineup for Game 3.

Stars without Johnson, the Suns have been scoring well over 100 points. The surprising thing is that the Suns have been able to top them.

Barely but surely, coach Gregg Popovich has given Ginobili more free reign.

"I think it was gradual, but steady," Ginobili said of his growing role. "I learned doing the little things that every team needs. That was the way to gain Pop's confidence [and] to show your teammates that you are a team player, that you don't care about the stats, that you want to make those better, too, and that you just care about winning."

Ginobili was rewarded last summer with a $32 million, six-year contract. Since then, he's led Argentina to a gold medal at the Olympics and made his first All-Star team.

"There just a natural progression for a good player," Popovich said. "He's a player mature in the league and understands the system and gets comfortable, if he's good enough, he becomes a go-to guy."

AP

Injury freezes Dutch swim champ

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands — Dutch Olympic swimming champion Pieter van den Hoogenband won't swim at the world championships in Montreal in July because he is still recovering from a hernia operation.

"Doctors have warned me that I'd be taking an irresponsible risk if I took part," he wrote Friday in a weekly column in the Dutch newspaper Algemeen Dagblad.

He said he was swimming well after the operation but "not as well anymore. I would feel warm and worse. If I did not stop now, I would do irreparable damage to my body."

Van den Hoogenband was two gold medals in Sydney setting world records in the 100- and 200-m freestyle. He defended his 100 title with gold in Athens last summer. In all, he has four gold, 10 silver and five bronze medals in world competitions.

He said he was sorry to miss Montreal, but that was now focusing on the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

"In China I want to become the first swimmer in history to win gold three consecutive times in the main event, the 100-m freestyle," he wrote.

AP

VAN DEN Hoogenband

Champions Cup: Indian five doesn't worry RP coach Chot

By Ray Lauren

THERE are no scouting reports on India, but RP Team coach Chot Reyes is before unrattled.

He insists to use the adaptability of his team to unknown situations in the 11th Phil-Asia Champions Cup which begins tomorrow at the Araneta Coliseum.

"We're absolutely no idea Cindy and she's good," said Reyes. "We like to play somewhere in a position where our ability to adjust and adapt will be put to test."

The Filipinos, composed of Philippine Basketball Association stars, tackle the Indians at 6 p.m. after the 5:30 opening ceremony of the eight-nation tournament co-hosted by the PBA and the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

Other marquee game pit Lit. Iran against defending champion Lebanon. Slayers at 12:30 p.m., Korean against Syria at 2:45 p.m. and United Arab Emirates-Saudi against Jordan-Star Link at 8:15 p.m.

Qatar Al Rayyan and Kazakhstan Tefal draw slips.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has given her full backing to the event which will run up to June 5.

In a message sent to the BAP Mr Arroyo said: "Cordial greetings to the BAP as you host the Champions Cup."

"This athletic competition is a perfect venue for each delegation to develop and enhance the teamwork and improve the individual capabilities of the athletes by continually staging this event, the PBA not only molds the athletes into well-rounded competitive citizens, but also empowers upon their minds the importance of devoting their talents to conservative and productive ends for their individual benefit and for the common good," the President wrote the BAP.

"May we continue to promote Philippine tourism and make our foreign guest experience our unique brand of Filipino hospitality," Ms Arroyo added.

Joining the Philippines and India in Group A are Lebanon, Kazakhstan and Iran.

Group B is composed of Syria, Qatar, UAE, Brunei and Jordan.

Tournament format calls for the teams to battle their groupmates in the single-round eliminations, with the top two squads in each group advancing to the crossover semifinals.

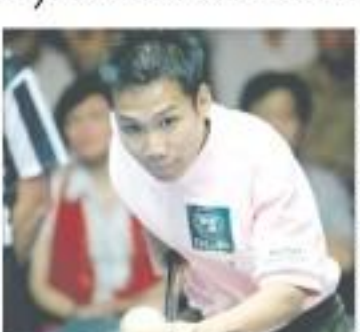
Qatar will be headed by 6-foot-8 Yasser Ismael Musa, two-time Most Valuable Player of the ABC Championship, 6-6 Mohammed Qwais Al-Jaber and Mohammed Issam Abdulla.

Sterling up the Qataris, who are already two-time champions, are former Todd Day holdout, CBC and former Spurs sharpshooter Sean Marks, who is one of several with the rest of the teams school, which is close in last night.

Composing Team RP-Ten Miguel Beer are San Miguel Beer's Sir Enrique and Dondon Hontiveros, Talk 'N Text's Jimmy Alapag, Purefoods' Dennis and Willie Miller, Sportscast Ginebra's Rommel Adducul and Mark Caguioa; Coca-Colo's Bal Harris, Pop84's Bonnie Tibialo and Alaska's Sonny Thoss.

ALL-FILIPINO BILLIARDS

Pagulayan, Bustamante rout foes



EITHER Bustamante (left) or Pagulayan will stand for the axis after their semifinal tussle into last night.

SPORTSWATCH

Global Destiny league sizes up

GROUP champions in the Viva Global Destiny Basketball League are one step in tuning for the tourney's finale as well as in the middle of June. Namesake Valenzuela Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, Marikina's Robert Jaworski Shoe and Quezon City Elite have topped their respective groups in the event hosted by Solid Video, Sony Pilla, and MJC Infinity Cable Internet. Pinoy Weekly topped Pinoy Red, 85-71, last weekend and became the latest squad to join the Sen. Enrile side. The team is also the second of the tournament also headed by Regent Food and Makers Lab. Six of these teams are slated to vie for their respective groups. The last squad is a bit of tough competition in the recently created of the Viva Global Destiny Basketball League's tournament secretary, Bernie Ali Sueltar, who is also Solid PR for marketing and operations, said.

BCAP cage clinics start June 1

THE MANILA Coaches Association of the Philippines, in coordination with Ace Sports Management, will be hosting the first of its basketball clinics for coaches from June 1 to 3 at the Cuneta Astrodome. Spokesperson Jaime Jimenez said Manuel Ramos, Diamond Dy, Rey Bautista, Jr. Sandoval, Eric Altamirano, Ron Tolentino, Jimmy Mariano, Chua Ong and Mark Villanueva will be conducted by Tim Cone of Ronda, Yeng Guiao of Red Bull, Alfonso Chua of Elite Lechon and multititled coach Derrick Pumaren, who currently sits on the bench of Air Philippines and the UE of Manuel Camus as team consultant. It is the desire to continue the development of players from the grassroots level, Philippine Amateur Management has had an affiliation with the USA Campus and China to design a coach's development program. Chito Narvasa, president of the BCAP and PBA Sports, will present the nationwide development program to the members. For reservations and information, interested parties may call 527-2136 to 38 or e-mail sportsdepartment.com.ph.

Mandaluyong age-group tennis

THE MANDALUYONG Tennis Club will hold the first Mabuhay Age Group Tennis Championships on June 6 to 7 and 13 to 14 at the MTC courts. MCBM is composed for Mandaluyong City residents in the boys' and girls' 10-under, 12-under, 14-under, 16-under, 18-under and women 30 years. Register at the MTC (632-4668 and 531-7812) or contact MTC President Eddy Gregorio (0917-531-5681).

Provincial gamebirds see action

THE WEST gamebirds from the provinces will be unleashed today as Philippine Mega Gaming's "Summer Heat 4-Cock Derby" gets under way at 4 p.m. Sabang action is divided by Benito Soliven, Ebony de Guzman, Jeffrey Lucero, Bonna Arevalo, Capt. Robles, L.R. Pimentel, Benton By Edge, Lawrence Macaraeg, Jack Jones and Pete Briones, among others. Scheduled today in the first round eliminations under the two-cock matchplay are Monday, 10th qualifiers shall meet one another for the title on Wednesday, June 1. Admission prices are P200 and P300. Awarding the featured winner is a Toyota Hi-Lux Diesel. The guaranteed prize is P1.2 million. To be hosted by Hidalgo owner Hoby Lopez, the cockfest is an offshoot of the Cavite Hi-Rib Ala derby last month.

Sta. Ana hosts 4-cock derby

PAMPANGA'S Sta. Ana Sabungan will host its first derby in the championship round of "Bayleve 4-Cock Derby" at the Sta. Ana Cockpit. P. Pamintuan, Blanquita Diaz, Jaime Jimenez and Lito Sarmiento are among the entries for the eliminations round, and the added P40,000 each to Rooster, and Hooks Rigg Pretta and Miss Belinda. All qualifiers plus the 20 new contributors who will bend tonight's four cocks will have action in today's finale. The guaranteed prize is P700,000 for an entry fee of P15,000. Interested parties may call 858-3674 and 888-3810 for inquiries or 0917-534-9807 (Glen) and 0918-829-1211 (Rudy). Meanwhile, Sta. Ana Cockpit's regular featherweight schedule is every Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

'Sabong' action resumes at LPC

MEC-MEC'd and exciting sabong action resumes at the air-conditioned Las Piñas Coliseum tonight with the staging of another special 5-cock derby to be sponsored by Sagupaan Consolidated 2000. Almost all fights are lined up to this event to be handled by Edith Santiano and coach Elito Villanueva, who handles cockers from Pampanga. Cockpit Gen. Pedro Colmenares Jr. and Miss Coliseum Director Cecille Colmenares. A stake is P500,000 with 5% (P25,000) as entry fee. Cash (5%), Hell and Sick (10%) and (20%) (P100,000) go to cockers. Meanwhile, Las Piñas Coliseum's featherlight schedule is from Monday to Sunday, said pit manager Mac Sabas. Also set is the "Fueled With Ten-Cock Blaze" on June 7, with 6 in, and Rizalo Elite as hosts.

Buenavista, Martes topbill Power Race

ELOISE to 3,500 runners, from the young of the crop down to the weekend joggers and ordinaries, will answer the starting gun as the brand of shoes name-run when the 2015 New Balance Power Race Elite roll at the Fort Bonifacio Global City.

Edward's "Wyrk" Buenavista and Christabel Martes remain the runners to beat in the two-stripers 10K event for a host of others will be out to bid the fastest men's finish to finish title bid in the men's and ladies divisions of what has become one of the country's biggest running events in terms of prize money and participation.

In fact, the New Balance Power Race, offering a total pot of P250,000 in cash and prizes, will be the first to feature a competition among the country's top corporations with Toyota Motolong in the seven-man team in the 10K out points race which stakes P50,000 worth of pdf certificates in the champion.

Teams will have Imores, Alin, Silva, Gonyon and Vivo in the 10-team race which includes ABS-CBN, Advance Network Industrial Corp., Cargo Safeway Inc., Fluor Daniel, Inc., Gold's Gym, Kimberly-Packard AP DBU (col., Mitral, Mercury Drug, NCR Command (NFP), Procter & Gamble Alpha, Procter & Gamble Asia, San Miguel Corp. and TMC Corp.

Also on top cache event, sponsored by New Balance for the fourth straight year and backed by Planet Sports, The Athletes Foot, Oishi Underwear, Power Bar and ISOC, is the 4K collegiate run featuring 42 four-man squads vying for the top P15,000 cash prize.

They include Ateneo de Manila, De La Salle-A University and De La Salle-B (women's), Mapua, UP Diliman and University of Santo Tomas.

Sen. Pia Cayetano, Philippine Olympic Committee chair Robert Aventajado, Tagaytay Mayor Freddie Tingson, Business security manager Baby Revilla, Cynthia Carrion, actor Eddie Demo and taekwondo star Aspar Lozano will grace the event. Participants must be at the assembly area on 26th Street, Southern Global City not later than 6 a.m. for race briefings and check in.

HOUR OF THE HORSEMEN Honoring icon Don Antonio Floirendo Sr. receives the Hall of Fame of Racing award from Philippine Racing Commission chairman Greg Avenido (in coat) as Ambassador Brent Legislacion (left) and Pangasinan Rep. Mikey Arroyo (holding his daughter Mikaela) look on during the 43rd anniversary celebration of the PCSO last Monday at the Metro Manila Turf Club in Makati City. Other awardees who were recognized for their big contributions in the horseracing industry are (clockwise, from the top) Jose "Babes" Quiroz as Breeder of the Year; former Manila mayor and Grand Cupcake Alfredo Lim as Owner of the Year (he was represented by his son-in-law, Rep. Arnaldo and Dumbo Bagatsing's jockey Pat Dilema as Jockey of the Year; Daniel C. Lee, owner of Haras de la Vue stud in Subic as Breeder of the Year; Hermie Esguerra as Horseowner of the Year; and Mandaluyong Rep. Neptali Gonzales as Ambassador of Horse Racing Awardee.

Canceled fight in Florida gives Peñalosa heartache

by Salvee L. Lagumbay

CEBU Pelaloza, inactive since last November, was all primed up to score another upset on American soil. What he encountered, instead, was heartache following a botched bout.

The former World Boxing Council superfly king was slated to meet his Colombian foe Reynaldo Hamada for the first time yesterday during the official weigh-in at a yacht to be held at the Cebu Marina in Panglao, Bohol, Wednesday. The Filipino ex-champ, however, was told the fight was off about 24 hours before. Peñalosa never saw an opponent.

The bout would have been Peñalosa's first under the promotional arm of Manuel Muhammad and his first under new trainer Buddy McGirt, but it turned out, it might as well have been his last.

Sportsman Tony Aldeguer, who discovered and signed Peñalosa into an unrivaled big fighter, revealed that the southpaw was on his way to the weigh-in room when he received a phone call that Hamada never got down to Florida to do the fight. Despite the offer however, Hamada's camp still pulled out of the fight.

PEÑALOSA

18 national lift marks fall

CEBU CITY—A total of 18 national records were set at the start of the Philippine Weightlifting Association National 3-in-1 Open Championships women's division at the Sutchez Basketball and Recreation Center here.

Cebuana national team member Rose Ella Cale swept the senior 75 kg division by erasing the records of Judith Bella. She saved 72.5 kg (30 kg) in the snatch and 102.5 kg (77.5) in the clean and jerk for a total of 175 kg (132.5 kg).

Sharing honors are fellow Cebuanas Jane Cabanero, Emelyn Quiamco and Melvin Rose Bojos.

In the 69 kg class, Cabanero topped the ranks of fellow Cebuanas when she posted 85 kg (70 kg) in the snatch and 100 kg (92.5) in the clean and jerk for a total of 185 kg (162.5 kg).

Nava keeps lead despite draw

MANUEL Blanco Roderick Nava are but winning win behind in the seventh round, but the chase was all he needed to retain sole leadership in the Luzon division of the 2015 National Senior Championships at the Arellano Center of SM City Manila.

Nava pushed his total to 6.5 points, half point ahead of Vhe surging Ki Magallanes and Elmo Ballesteros.

Veteran National Master Aaron Salvador beat fellow NMR Leonilyl Quiaco to rally his total to seven points.

BUSINESS

E-mail at ...
Editor Raoul D. Morales
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WHAT'S INSIDE

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ICTSI bags Madagascar port project

BILATERAL TRADE TALKS
Philippine Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima, right, and his Japanese counterpart Sadakazu Tanigaki shake hands before starting their bilateral talks at the Finance Ministry in Tokyo, Wednesday. –

PORT operator International Container Terminal Services Inc. won the bidding to manage Madagascar's main port, the World Bank's private-sector lending arm announced yesterday in Washington DC.

Four large foreign companies tendered bids for the 30-year concession to operate and develop the container terminal at the country's port of Toamasina in Madagascar, the process guided by the International Finance Corp.'s Advisory Services Department.

Manila-based ICTSI's bid was chosen over those of Danish shipping company AP Moller-Maersk, Hutchison Whampoa Ltd. and Mediterranean Shipping Co.

"The concession ... is not signed yet but they are the official winner of the bid," Bernard Sheehan, the IFC's director for Advisory Services in East Asia, told Reuters.

Bidding in a private operation for the port's concession was aimed as part of Madagascar's effort to become a bigger player in the shipping business, the government said.

The Indian Ocean island has been in the spotlight lately as movie Hollywood-produced movie called "Madagascar" and was the first aid recipient of Washington's Millennium Challenge Account for impoverished countries.

IFC's Sheehan said the new port operators would improve efficiency and capacity of the terminal and lower the cost of Madagascar's goods sent to market.

"It is usual that in situations of major port reforms you get gains and efficiency of between 10 to 40 percent in terms of costs borne by the exporters," he said in an interview.

Sheehan said the role of IFC's Advisory Services added transparency and credibility to the bidding process. It also helped send a broader message of the government's commitment to develop the economy with the help of private partnerships.

He said the contract should raise about $300 million in customs taxation for the government over the life of the concession.

ICTSI has, among other things, agreed to

(CONTINUED ON ...)

BSP SURVEY

Consumers turn pessimistic

By Doris C. Dumlao

FILIPINO consumers have turned more pessimistic in the second quarter as household incomes are seen barely coping with rising cost of goods, based on the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' latest poll.

The latest BSP quarterly consumer expectation survey conducted among 2,000 households between April 1 and 7 indicated a deterioration in the diffusion index (DI) to ...89.9 from +44.2 in the previous survey.

Respondents cited high prices of food, utilities, oil and transportation, healthcare services and higher household expenditures as reasons for their declining optimism.

The DI is the percentage share of respondents that answered in the affirmative less those that answered negative in a given indicator. A negative DI thus indicates a bearish view when measuring confidence levels.

All of the three components indices of overall consumer expectations – family income, family financial situation and economic condition of the country – declined during the period.

"These indicate that majority of respondents were not anticipating immediate improvement in their family income and family financial conditions," said BSP Officer-in-

(CONTINUED ON ...)

Local growers urged to patent 'Manila mango'

By Abigail L. Ho

THE INTELLECTUAL Property Office has urged the local mango industry to patent the name "Manila mango" to prevent other companies from riding on its popularity.

IPO director general Adrian Cristobal Jr. said he was scheduled to meet with the Mango Producers Exporters Cooperation next week to look at ways on how to provide the mango industry with the necessary intellectual property protection.

He recently ordered a search for trademark applications, or geographical indications (GIs) registration, for the name "Manila mango" in intellectual property offices worldwide.

An initial search of the United States Patent and Trademark Office showed that there was no application for trademark registration for "Manila mango" filed in 1994, but was abandoned the following year.

Trademark searches were also made in the intellectual property offices of Canada, Australia, Mexico and Spain to ensure that no other entity had yet staked its claim on the name that rightfully belonged to the Philippine export product, he said in a statement yesterday.

"What we are opposing is the use of geographical names as brands or trademarks. The Manila name rightfully belongs to no other country but the Philippines," Cristobal added.

He said the IPO had also requested the ambassador of the Philippine ambassador to Mexico, as well as the Philippine commercial attaché and trade representative in the US, to gather more information on the "Manila mango" trademark.

"If there is any trademark application on Manila mango, we will support our local producers to institute the necessary action to oppose it," he said.

Walk before you rain

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bautista III

SINCE many of us cannot afford to buy brand-new cars, the new commissioner of customs under this vain administration, a guy named Alberto Lina, has a bright idea.

And that is, we should just walk.

What a brilliant proposal! How why did we not think of such a simple yet obvious solution to such a major issue? We should all pay homage to Lina for his genius.

Walking is good. As my Sprung Doing used to say, "learn to walk before you run, because time waits for no one."

See, that's why Lina is brilliant, because walking is good for our health.

In this economy anyway, following Lina's bright idea on most walk by house to go from place to place...such as the nearest office.

Well, we do not have any mass transport system. What we have are bits and pieces of rail transit masquerading as mass transport. And so, everybody uses cars. And so is this economy, air pollution is hitting the danger zones.

Thanks to Lina's bright idea, elsewhere, we can expect to live longer by walking in the streets, just to fill up our lungs with dirty air.

OUR GIFTED customs commissioner, who cares for us a lot, said that's why he wants to clean the air by making us inhale it, perhaps meant what he said about us just "walking," only as a figure of speech.

Come on, he does not really want all of us who cannot afford brand-new cars to walk...he just wants us to save enough money so that we can buy brand-new cars instead.

Of course, many of us would rather save for the schooling of our children, before we could even think of...okay, DREAM of...buying one of those costly brand-new cars.

But certainly many people do not concern Lina, even if we throw him, we must count every peso of our hardly-land earnings, because taxes are rather hard.

Sure, if you cannot afford to buy brand-new cars, it is not Lina's problem. He is just doing what this vain administration told him to do.

Actually, when Lina told us to go take a hike, he was only trying to defend a new tax imposition of this vain administration on imported second-hand vehicles.

This month, as expected (not to the majority of us who cannot afford brand-new cars, Charlotte is beyond it yet) "specific tax" on imported, second-hand vehicles:

Oh, it only amounts to P300,000 per unit, which is on top of the regular customs duties and other taxes on imported vehicles—whether new or old. That still!

TO JUSTIFY its imposition of such an inequitable tax on things that, actually the less moneyed among us can afford, this vain administration had to resort to pulling out big.

Malacañang issued Executive Order No. 418, imposing the P300,000 specific tax on all types of imported second-hand vehicles, be they cars, buses, trucks, and everything.

Here I quote the order: "There is a need to mitigate impact of used motor vehicle trading on air quality and road safety."

There you have it! In the name of the environment and your very own life and limb, this vain administration simply wants you to pay up, period!

I am trying to figure out, however, by what stretch of the imagination made Malacañang conclude that the new payment of P300,000 per vehicle can stop air pollution and road accidents.

And to think, it must be an other kind of vehicle has a SECOND-HAND vehicle. Not only that, it must be an IMPORTED vehicle.

Do we take it then that brand-new vehicles do not pollute or figure in road accidents? The same goes now for similar second-hand but NOT imported vehicles, is that it?

Let me see if I got it right—you mean to say, boss, if we pay a P300,000 tax for an imported and vehicle, all of a sudden, its smoke becomes clean and its passengers become immortal? Wow! This is pure and simple sorcery.

WHAT will happen then if the measured among us, such as the parking lords and the parking peasants, decide to buy imported second-hand vehicles?

They can surely afford to pay for the said specific tax. Hell, for that matter, a lot of people—mainly the rich—can afford to pay for it.

So tell us, boss, where does the new specific tax stop air pollution and road accidents? Only in your dreams?

Like it or not, Malacañang was just using the "environment" and "road safety" as a shield to cover the real reason of the new tax.

Come on, everybody knows, perhaps except the customs commissioner, that the car importers was the direct result of the lobby of local car companies.

They are the companies which call themselves "manufacturers," although for the past 25 years, all they did here was assemble parts less cars, so to import ready-made cars.

And in all their 25 years or so, they enjoyed heavy government protection, plus a lot of tax breaks.

And in all those years, we were hoping against hope that, someday, they would make cars affordable for us.

They just made second-hand cars far from reach, too!

GRANTED that brand-new cars, both those assembled here and those that the car companies import themselves, do not emit deadly fumes, and they also do not figure in any road accident whatsoever.

But even this vain administration believes that second-hand, locally assembled vehicles do not pollute, even if they are as old as 20 and so noisy as tricycles.

As far as I can remember, no car company have also has ever recalled any one of their cars, which probably means that every vehicle they ever produced was perfect, and that their "road worthiness" was never an issue with Malacañang.

Granted that the local car companies, which by the way are majority-owned by foreign car companies, which are doing all the lobbying in the Palace, only sell pollution-free and accident-proof vehicles, whether brand-new or second-hand.

Will the imposition of the still tax on imported second-hand vehicles make those "local" brand-new cars affordable, even to the smuggling small businesses?

I guess those guys should just deliver their goods to us by walking!

AKO KO TO let you to on a little secret. Those second-hand imported small trucks, for instance, actually become popular among small businesses, because they were affordable.

Look, a brand-new small truck (also imported, by the way, and imposed by the so-called "local" car companies) cos over almost P1 million—without the "body" yet, at that! And then you have to wait for several weeks, even if you have the money!

I checked the classified ads, and they showed that an imported second-hand small truck costs only about P300,000—with everything!

Guess why imported used vehicles became an industry in itself, thereby giving much, much more income opportunity to us than those "local" foreign-owned car companies, which claim to employ thousands of thousands, although the DOF admits they only employ 9,000 or 8,000...cops.

Would you why, and it's because only a few can afford brand-new vehicles, and so those cheap vehicles have a ready market here, get me.

And so what will happen to us with Malacañang trying to protect foreign interests in our own land, by pulling our leg with talk about "environment" and "safety?"

What will happen to us who are not appointed to the customs bureau, although we have been trained to sniff out those imported bonded warehouses, which were housed here for smuggling?

Well, I guess we will all just have to walk, even in the rain!

Distributed by NewspaperDirect

Gov't s

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy is maintaining its stance that oil from the Malampaya deep water gas-to-power project must be taken out, despite the Malampaya consortium members' refusal to undertake the oil-drawing process.

Energy Undersecretary Peter Anthony Abaya said the DOE was not giving up on the oil component of the Malampaya gas find as this could help the country move toward energy independence.

"Our position is still to get the oil out. Even if it's just 28 million to 30 million barrels of oil, we still have to get it out for the country's use. But it has to be taken out soon, as it will be harder to bring that out later when the gas pressure drops," he told reporters.

Philippine National Oil Co.-Exploration Corp. president and chief executive Eduardo Mañalac earlier said that it was still realistically feasible at this point to draw first oil from the reserves by April 2006, although it would be quite difficult due to the delays in forming the consortium that would do it.

Right now, he said, the government was having some difficulty in finding a technically capable firm to extract oil from the Malampaya gas field due to the high degree of expertise needed in doing so.

"There are many interested investors. It's a question of whether or not these investors are experienced enough. We need to be very sure so as not to jeopardize the gas production," he said.

PNOC-EC, which holds a 10-percent stake in the Malampaya consortium, is now looking for entities that would help it develop and operate the Malampaya oil rim.

ICTSI . . .

From page B1

recapitalize the port authority and invest in several fixed assets to improve operations. The IFC said it stood ready with loans to help with the investments.

Towfiqua Hoque, an investment office for the IFC's Advisory Services, said one of ICTSI's biggest contractual obligations would be to improve the performance of the port, which has long been the worst performer in Africa.

Madagascar is the world's biggest vanilla producer and Africa's third-largest exporter of textiles to the United States.

Sheahan said improving Madagascar's sea trade link was part of the government's push to upgrade transport infrastructure.

With just 6,000 km of constructed roads on the island, the size of France, the lack of transport infrastructure is a major impediment to development.

The IFC, whose mission is to promote sustainable private sector investment in developing countries, is currently also working on a concession program for Madagascar's larger airports and helping to reform the country's power sector to increase electricity supply.

JP Morgan reactivating PSE seat

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

TWO YEARS after suspending its operations in the Philippines, Island broker JP Morgan Securities (Philippines) will reopen its brokerage unit as the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), business sources said.

Roberto Ocampo, chair of JP Morgan Philippines, told the Inquirer the renewed interest in the Philippine market was largely extended by the renewed investor interest in initial public offerings.

JP Morgan's application to reopen its unit is still pending with the PSE and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Other sources said JP Morgan was planning to relocate to the PSE by July.

JP Morgan was one of the several foreign and local brokerage houses that suspended operations in April 2003 due to the then poor market condition.

PSE president Francis Lim said JP Morgan's renewed interest in the local stock market was a welcome development.

JP Morgan in the Philippines is part of the JP Morgan Chase group in New York, which has assets of about $1.1 trillion and operations in more than 50 countries.

The firm is a leader in investment banking, financial services for consumers and businesses, financial transaction processing, asset and wealth management, and private equity.

In the meantime, power generation firm First Generation Holdings and Producers Bank Bank of Gokongwei in Nueva Ecija are keen on making their debut in the stock market. First Gen has expressed its interest to list on exchange this year and has tapped investment banks UBS, CLSA, BDO Capital and ATR-Kim Eng as underwriters. First Gen is targeting to offer between 20 and 40 percent of new and previously owned shares worth about $300 million.

First Gen is the holding company of the Lopez Group's power and energy-related businesses.

First Gen subsidiaries First Gen Power Corp. and FGP Corp. own 1,000 MW and 500 MW natural gas-fired power plants, respectively, both plants are in Batangas.

First Gen is 88.4 percent owned by First Philippine Holdings. The balance is owned by Aclan Mitsubishi Development Company (Aclan) FG Power Corp. Ltd., a $400 million investment fund involved in Asian private infrastructure projects and industries, one of the largest trading conglomerates in Japan.

In its management report, the SEC also said it had canvassed several companies for a possible initial public offering. These included thrift bank Philippine National Bank, auto maker Isuzu Corp., coffee shop operators Figaro and call center group eTelecare.

The PSE also intends to ask other firms to conduct their IPOs, including Internet cafe managing company Cybido Corp., National Bookstore, cellfone (Nextel) unit Digitel Telecommunications and PHC Energy Development Corp.

Last year, only International Exchange Bank formed the most active issue, the thrift bank's shares of the Ayala Group gained around 35 billion from its public offer while SM Investments Corp., the flagship company of mall tycoon Henry Sy Jr. fetched P29 billion from its public sale of shares, so far the biggest IPO in PSE's history.

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FLI earmarks ₱1.2B for 8 projects in '05

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FILINVEST Land Inc. of the Gotianun family is setting aside P1.2 billion for capital expenditure this year, FLI president Joseph Ng said.

The company will implement eight major residential projects this year, Ng added.

Listed top for implementation this year were the following: Summerfield, an affordable housing project in San Pedro, Laguna; Northview Villas in Quezon City and Batasan Ridge in San Mateo, Rizal, which target the middle-income market; two mid-rise public housing projects such as Villa Mercedita in Sariaya and Bicutan Terraces in Cebu; a leisure project—Timberland Sports and Nature Club in Timberland Heights and Nuvali Farms in Antipolo, Rizal.

FLI is also increasing its authorized capital stock to P30 billion from P10 billion. In a notice statement, the company said its board approved on April 13 the increase in the company's authorized capital stock to support the capital requirements of all FLI businesses in the future.

The capital increase is expected to give the company more financial room to enable possible acquisitions or to restructure, improve working capital and optimize its overall capital structure.

Related to this, FLI's board also approved the declaration of stock dividends worth P1.2 billion.

Fueled by the expected recovery in the property market, FLI is optimistic it can achieve a 18.21 percent growth in its income this year from last year's P695.95 million.

"The outlook is positive. We are targeting an increase in sales by 20 percent this year," Ng said.

In the first quarter, FLI said in net earnings grew 28 percent to P185 million from the year-ago level. Gross profit increased 49 percent to P329 million from P220 million.

Its middle-income housing group, established by Cora Dela Cruz, accounted for the bulk of the profit's rise.

FLI said attractive pricing, continuous marketing activities, and increases of land in both legacy and inflow boosted sales.

Interests and other incomes increased by 181 percent in the first quarter.

The company's equity earnings in Filinvest Alabang Inc. increased to P6 million.

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DISCLOSURES

ELECTED directors of **Marikina Manufacturing Inc.** were Edison Ng Sebing, Ban Tiamchuan, Ferdinand Edwin Co Sebing, Prasnoth Phoenirun, Chan Tiaokiaw E. Kapawhan Sangalang, Emil Bonifacio Jr., Jacinto Ng, Lourdes Ng, Benjamin Lacsed, Regina Co Sebing and Trinita Co Sebing.

***

JAIME Ong Tenjanco was named member of **Solidbank Bank** committee. Also appointed were Felipa Bayron Jr., vice president/head of human resources management group, and Ernesto Manansala, senior vice president/CFO.

***

MARIO Vengson Peñaño Payos and Christine Rose resigned as directors of **Asian Alliance Inc.** Others who resigned were Lincoln Le Chuan Chan as president; Leonardo Gabriel Jr. as treasurer. Payos as secretary; vice president Carmel Barbo as vice president for finance and Grace Anne Gabriel as VP. Elected directors were Michael Chipman, Leo Herrera and Antonio Jose Periquet. Meanwhile, Ian H. and Erlinda Ong Wee were elected president and treasurer, respectively. (Compiled by Marissa P. Arroyo, PDI Research)

Consumers . . .

Cheryl Amanda Tiongco Jr.

"Likewise, more respondents objected the economy to worsen compared to those who expected it to improve," he said.

The outlook for the third quarter was also bleak as the SI went down to 24.2 percent from 35.6 percent in the previous survey. This means there is a bigger number of respondents expected the economic situation of the country and their household budget to be worse off in the next quarter.

For the fourth consecutive quarter, consumer confidence for the year ahead also deteriorated.

At a result, consumers were even more cautious in purchasing assets in the second quarter of 2005 compared to the previous survey. All three components declines in terms of buying motives—consumer durables, houses and/or lot and motor vehicles—dropped compared to the previous survey.

Customs after CJHDevco for back taxes, duties

By Michelle V. Rivera

THE BUREAU of Customs is running after Camp John Hay Development Corp. for some P72 million in back taxes and duties.

Customs District Collector Edward G. Sudaria, in a letter to CJHDevco dated last May 26, said the company was liable to pay P71.98 million in import and duties on the importation it made from 1998 to 2000.

The BOC has given CJHDevco 15 days to settle the amount, or the agency would take legal action against the company.

The back taxes were executed after the Supreme Court modified its special economic zone status. The court order effectively nullified the tax and duty exemption privileges earlier granted to the Camp John Hay developer.

The BOC move came following an earlier decision of the Bureau of Internal Revenue denying CJHDevco's request for authority to print non-VAT receipts and invoices.

The BIR said the Supreme Court decision effectively made CJHDevco an ordinary corporation and, as such, it is subject to the 35-percent corporate income tax and the 10-percent value added tax.

CJHDevco cried foul over the move of the Customs to collect back taxes and duties since the Supreme Court ruling, stressing that its lease agreement with the government agency Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) clearly provided for the company's fiscal perks.

"CJHDevco will seek reconsideration. We will pursue all legal steps to protect our rights as signified vis-a-vis our lease agreement," lawyer Gina Alvarez, CJHDevco spokesperson, said in a statement.

CAMP John Hay Manor, one of the major projects implemented by the PA Bloom group, but converted as the former Americans military base.

CJHDevco stressed that the tax and duty exemptions were guaranteed by the BCDA, which is the government agency tasked the developer to bid for the development of Camp John Hay in 1996, and that the granting of the fiscal incentives was clearly stated in the agreement signed by the two parties.

The move of the BIR and the BOC to run after CJHDevco for taxes and duties came in the wake of the company's tussle with the BCDA over rental fees.

The BCDA is collecting from some P12.16 billion in rental fees from CJHDevco, saying the company had not been paying even since 1998.

BCDA said that with the unpaid rental fees, it was now seriously considering taking over the management of Camp John Hay.

For its part, CJHDevco said it would only agree to settle the rental fees if the government honored the lease agreement that provided for the company's tax and duty-free privileges.

"This only proves that we are not hiding behind the Supreme Court ruling. The impact of the SC decision is immediate and real," the company said in the statement.

Budget airline seeks additional flights

By Clarissa S. Batino

TIGER Airways Pte Ltd., the Singapore-based low-cost airline of Singapore Airlines, is seeking additional flight entitlements to and from Clark Field, Pampanga, in anticipation of a steady increase in demand.

The airline, which serves the Singapore-Clark route, has asked the Civil Aeronautics Board for an authority to fly 10 times to and from Clark and to serve the Singapore-Cebu route.

Tony Davis, president of Tiger Airways, said the carrier also asked the CAB that it was considering resuming flights to and from Cebu in the near to medium term.

Tiger Airways launched its Clark-Singapore thrice weekly flights on April 3. Starting June, the carrier will have five flights a week. It will go daily by July.

Its load factor, according to Davis, flights to and from Clark are, most of the time, almost full.

Tiger—which is 45 percent owned by Singapore Airlines, 11 percent by Temasek Holdings and the rest by Indian investors of Ajay Air—flies mostly to and from Singapore. It now flies to 10 cities in six countries.

Like other budget carriers, Tiger Airways' biggest source is its price. The carrier offers a one-way fare of as low as $20 for those who will book three months ahead.

Additional charges imposed are P540 per round trip, P100 international fee, P71 in insurance surcharge, and P130 in administrative cost.

Davis said Tiger's regular fare was much higher than $20, but will substantially lower than the rates charged by full-service airlines. When it started the Clark-Singapore route, Tiger Airways offered one-way seat for as low as $0 each.

Yet Imes asked Clark and the CAB to let us fly 10 times a week. If they agree, we can start doing this by July. We will have morning and evening flights from Clark," said Davis in an interview.

Tiger Airways also wants to increase its frequency to Manila and Mactan-Cebu to five times each.

Davis said the main market exception is in Clark flights primarily of the company to accelerate its expansion plans in the Philippines.

Tiger Airways said it was seeing a great future for Clark as a major airport for low-cost carriers.

"Even some passengers prefer Clark because there is less traffic and it's easier to those from Central Luzon," said Davis.

Malaysia's budget carrier Air-Asia Berhad also started its daily Kuala Lumpur-Subic-Kinabalu-Clark flights on April 3. Its affiliate, Thai Air Asia, also has a pending application with the CAB for Clark-Thailand flights.

No frills carriers promise to bring in more tourists and enhance economic activity, especially in Clark.

Davis said his company was not here to steal traffic from existing operators, but to create demand through its low fares.

Gov't cuts tariff on petrochem to 5%

By Abigail L. Ho

THE CABINET-LEVEL Tariff and Related Matters (TRM) will cut the Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT) rates on petrochemical products from 7-30 percent to only 5 percent starting July.

The tariffs, however, will remain at the current levels when a planned naphtha cracker plant, being undertaken by JG Summit Petrochemical Corp., goes into commercial operations.

CEPT rates are dropped on goods and services traded among members of South East Asian Nations.

The Department of Trade and Industry yesterday said in a statement that this move would allow the downstream industries, the main market for imported petroleum products, to expand their operations with greater competitiveness.

Under the decree from Trade then-CEPT schemes, tariffs on almost all products traded in the region had been slashed to zero to 5 percent starting 2003.

The Philippines, however, decided to delay the tariff cuts on certain petrochemical products to protect the domestic industry. To do this, the government invoked a provision in the CEPT agreement that allowed member countries to protect certain industries.

EO 161, issued in 2002, retained petrochemicals in the CEPT's temporary exclusion list, setting tariffs at between 7 and 10 percent on 11 resins and some plastic products.

The Association of Petrochemical Manufacturers of the Philippines (APMP) became the voice of local manufacturers in asking the government to extend the EO 161 tariff down up to 2008 "to improve the viability of the establishment of the country's first ever naphtha cracker of JG Summit Petrochemical Corp."

JG Summit has revived plans to put up a naphtha-cracker facility in the country. This is expected to start commercial operations in the first half of 2008.

The downstream plastics industry, represented by the Philippine Plastic Industry Association (PPIA), had also threatened full support for this proposed naphtha-cracker facility.

Despite supporting this project, however, the downstream sector urged the government to immediately slash the tariffs on the EO 161-covered products to remedy the distortion between the resins and downstream plastics.

The PPIA agreed to the tariff cuts for petrochemical manufacturers, but only when the naphtha cracker becomes operational.

The downstream plastics sector warned of more company closures if petrochemicals would continue to be imported from the CEPT.

hp

Entertainment on the Go: HP Makes It Possible

Today's generation lives and breathes in a world of "instant" from shampoos, to noodles, to hair dyes, you name it - practically anything and everything consumed or utilized on a daily basis comes in a shortened or fix faster, more convenient form. Count in your pockets, vouchers, gestures, comics and countless other gizmos that promises to get the job done in, what else, an instant.

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Its large 14" WXGA high-definition LCD panel lets you watch your favorite DVDs or VCDs without causing eye strain. The HP Pavilion notebook PC has 20% more pixels than conventional 14" screens. Plus, the unsightly black strips at the top and bottom of the screen are removed. This means you see more vivid bigger and sharper pictures for that truly enjoyable movie experience.

You can even listen to your MP3s or CDs with absolute clarity if you're in the mood for some music.

Want your movies and music to go with you? The HP Pavilion notebook features the exclusive DuraDisk technology that lets you store audio CD or DVD in only 15 seconds without having to boot your computer.

What's more, the accompanying IR remote control, which slides comfortably in the PC card slot, literally puts entertainment right at your fingertips.

E-mail: super@inquirer.com.ph
Turn in your feedback: inquirer.sup.com/cgi-bin/message.cgi?DEP (Globe) or 280 (Smart)

Lava is a many-splendored thing

FAMA, found

It's organic! It's volcanic! It's the Pinatubo wellness adventure!

OUT THE WINDOW

Tats Diaz

That was 14 years ago. Today, who would have thought that what was once a dreary, barren land would come back to life, with new communities rising off the past and rising from the proverbial ashes?

Pinatubo has even become a favored destination for eco-adventure tourists, with both locals and foreigners trekking through rugged ridges to go up the area's feared volcano.

And after conquering the mountain, what better way to wash off the caked mud with... even more mud? Mudslinging may not be all that unusual in this country but this time, it's actually good for you, especially at the newly-opened Mt. Pinatubo Wellness Spa at the foot of the volcano in Capas, Tarlac. Slush... massage... volcano? You bet!

Multivitamin race

The multivitamin began with a zip-coasting 4x4 road trip through Crow Valley, an awesome site with the view of jagged mountain ranges stabbing the sandy plains. The ride was a helluva rush, as we drove through sand, rocky terrain and creaking ironlike rehab outcrossed in ghostly plumes. (I made a mental note to e-mail Jerry Stockhausen and Phil Keoghan to tell them that this would be a good Fast Forward challenge for the fourteenth season of The Amazing Race.)

In the foothills, we took a dip at the natural "hot" springs—which were really more like frothing. I should know because to my bane to take a zip to do this my new hairspray hair, I stepped into the water and pulled out a bunch of explosives because I thought my hair had melted in lava.

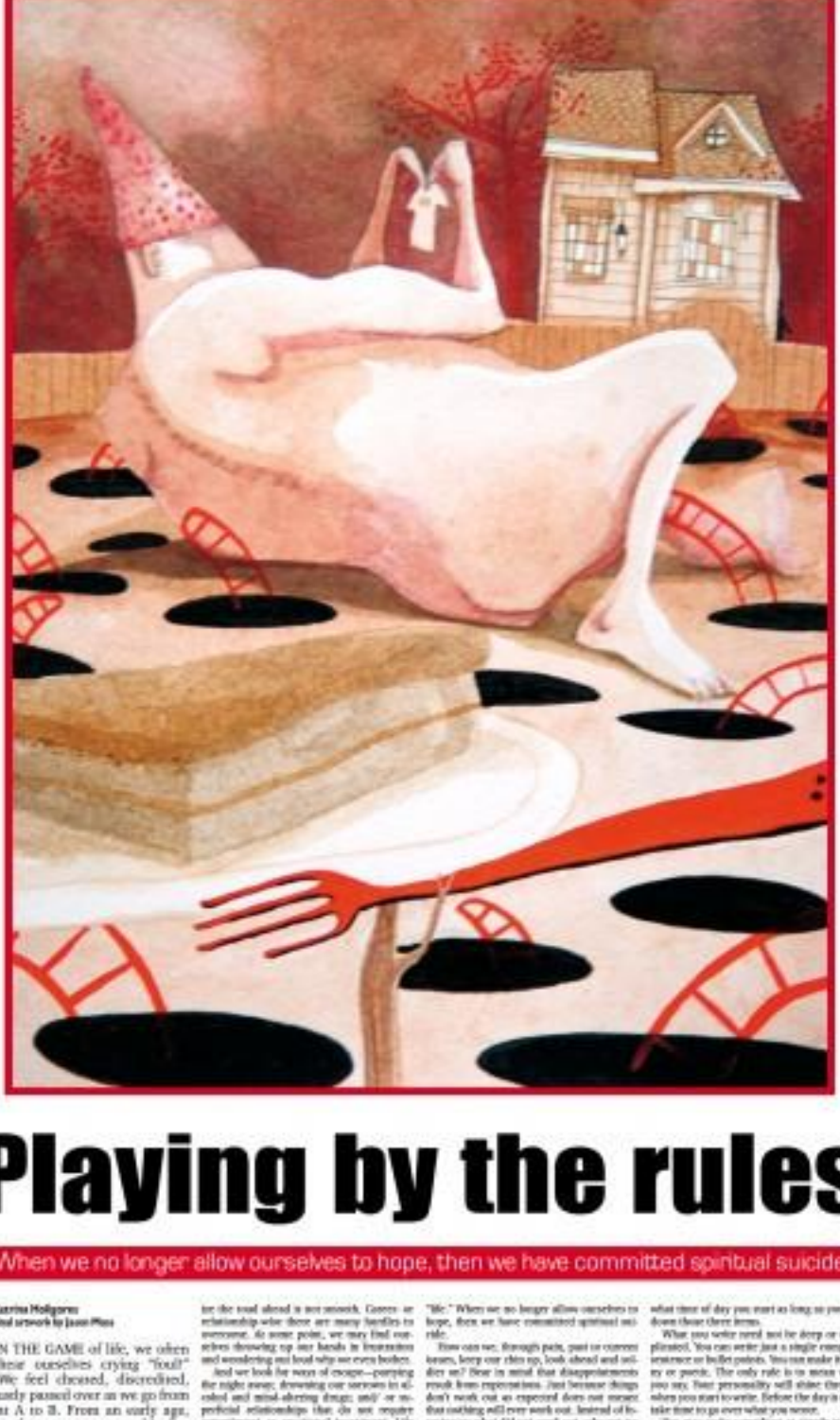
In the neighboring pools, I copied a little snack: eggs being boiled naturally in the clear hot waters. Yum.

A drive to the other side of the valley brought us to the serene Yambo Lake, where some locals

(JUMP TO)

BOILING by the hot springs

WOW! Scenic!



Playing by the rules

When we no longer allow ourselves to hope, then we have committed spiritual suicide

By Katrina Hollgarse
Original artwork by Jason Phua

IN THE GAME of life, we often hear ourselves crying "foul!" We feel cheated, discredited, unjustly passed over as we go from point A to B. From an early age, most of us are programmed by figures of authority—family or teachers—to believe that happiness means being the best at something (or everything).

The rules seem simple enough. Studying hard=good grades=good job. Good looking=popular=choice of relationships. Good family=good spouse=good marriage. I'm simplifying things a bit, but you get the picture.

Reality then hits. Despite abiding by the rules set by parents, teachers, peers or society, we are still nowhere near the pinnacle of happiness or fulfillment we desire. This strikes a painful, sometimes fatal, blow on our self esteem putting us in danger of living the rest of our life on auto-pilot.

Great Escape

Those planning their futures have to realise the road ahead is not smooth. Careers or relationship-wise there are many hurdles to overcome. At some point, we may find ourselves throwing up our hands in frustration and wondering out loud why we even bother.

And we look for ways of escape—partying the night away, drowning our sorrows in alcohol and mind-altering drugs; and/ or superficial relationships that do not require commitment or emotional investment. Life has thrown you a curve ball and perhaps it is better to give up and just watch from the sidelines.

Look around you, for many people you know (maybe including yourself?), it's "game over."

I spend a lot of time on the road constantly shifting the radio dial listening for something new. Although the iPod shuffle provides a random (surprise!) selection of songs, for me that's cheating.

Though I am certainly not a fan of hip hop (or is it R&B?), I recently heard a song which was primarily rap that I wish to share with those who have moved to the sidelines. The song is called "Hope" and though some words are way too fast for me to absorb, the message is simple. Part of the chorus says, "Be hopeful, and He'll make a way..."

Now, for those uncomfortable with religious references, let's just replace "He" with "life." When we no longer allow ourselves to hope, then we have committed spiritual suicide.

How can we, through pain, past or current issues, keep our chin up, look ahead and still dare on? Bear in mind that disappointments result from expectations. Just because things don't work out as expected does not mean that nothing will ever work out. Instead of focusing on what did not work out, why not try something else?

Be grateful

Sir cue likes an suggestions game—life included. So, since you are important enough to be invited to its party, then a "thank you" is in order, don't you think? Too many gripes, "Be thankful for what?" One look at the headlines or the state of your personal affairs and being thankful may be the furthest thing from your mind.

Sometimes we focus on what is missing rather than what is already there. If you want to make up each day with a brighter, lighter outlook on life then it's time to get down and be grateful. Here's one way to start:

Get a notebook and a pen. The notebook can be fancy, but chances are you will never write in it. Something practical will do. Every day write down three things, no more, no less, that you are grateful for (a doctor's master what time of day you start as long as you put down those three items.

What you write need not be deep or complicated. You can write just a single complete sentence or bullet points. You can make it fancy or poetic. The only rule is to mean what you say. Your personality will shine through when you start to write. Before the day is over, take time to go over what you wrote.

You may write something as simple as "today I am grateful that I had three full meals," "today I am grateful that no one (I love is sick," "today I am grateful for finding a parking space when I got to work." You will find that whatever "load" you may be carrying feels a little lighter.

Now you are looking at the positive things in your life. They happen to you every single day. Wow, when you actually think about it, something, no, at least three wonderful things happen to you everyday. When you wake up in the morning, you can probably start the day by writing "I am grateful today for waking up."

Trust me, when you begin your day with an awareness of what you should be thankful for, your vision of your future starts to change... for the better.

Life does play fair. We just have to follow some of its rules and remember how good it is to be a lifetime member.

Kai—aka Agent K, aka K is a femme fatale, an assassin off the pages of K.I.A., the new graphic novel by Marco Dimasano

She's not human!

By Jomar Sabrillo and Pepe Diokno

HEY GUYS, wanna interview a comic book character?

Normally, we'd say no—like, we're not Steve Martin—or David Duchovny... are you don't so... fake people.

But, at the risk of death, we had to. The subject: Kai—aka Agent K, aka K. (Do Jet pass on to negative K)...femme fatale, wannabe chick off the pages of K.I.A., first ever graphic novel penned by Marco Dimasano. (The book is already out, people! Get it! Go!)

(Like she cared, sad. She was really late. She entire shoot on set of her reliant to interview her!) She told us it's okay if we didn't have time for her. (Bitch, please!) She's gone. It was really I'm screaming) sitting down and talking to her.

Hey, Kai!

Would you like one more if we ask the wrong question?

(Smiles pleasantly) No, of course not. Credibly to what you may have heard, I only start ripping spines out when attacked first.

You're sexy and deadly. What makes you hotter compared to other femme fatales like Sheldon, Sydney Bristow, Le Femme Nikita, Anna Espy?

Thanks for the compliment. My main powers is the ability to learn an opponent's skills and counter them. Secondary is my partial immortality, which has the knack of coming back after I get "fatally" hit. Sydney Bristow and Nikita are just not in my league. Khikia would probably get some good cracks with her ass, but, subject close, I'd grab her and Chad's dad...As for Anna Espy, I can probably snap her like a twig. Did you see how thin she is?

You were created to be the nemesis of another heroine, Angel Ace. But we hear that you're more than a simple evil line killing machine. Reveal your real self to us.

Originally I was Angel's best friend, who became her enemy but was resurrected eventually to be self-her best friend. Well, after I'm resurrected by my arch-commander and resurrected with new powers and no memories of my past. My main motivation is recovering my past, no matter what it takes, such it back.

Your comic book's main issue is how you search for your identity in a world that continually seeks to dehumanize you. Why do you think this is such a big personal battle for everyone in the real world?

Well, in the real world there are few things people really have control of without outgoing one, governments and civil religion seeking something to say 4 per. can't tell me whether he/she reveals it in the world or not, is his/her own. It's the one thing unique to anyone, so keeping it safe is paramount.

Do you think this "search for identity" has to do with birth, morality or mind work?

I'm a soldier and an assassin, and all I have are my mission and my own. I have no control issues over the KIA1 organization. I'm only place where you can be safe and secure in it is your own body, to your own mind. If I'm going to stay alive either as Kai or as Agent K, I'm going to have to like who I really am and live with her. That's why identity is so important.

What is the state of society? How do you plan to kick it into oblivion?

The most despicable souls are those at the top; the ones who control all and are, by most standards, untouchable. That's where professionals like me come in. How do I plan to kick those ones oblivion? Stick pins, sure.

On to more serious stuff...

Does she matter?

No. I've fought opponents more and half my size, and it all boils down to how honed their combat skills are. (Eyes narrow) That IS what you were asking about, right...?

If you were a plant, how would you want to die?

I'd be a sun shade tree where kids can play under. My ultimate fate would be to become a cozy, comfy cushy chair. Why, really ...

What is your opinion of graphic novel artists? Are they for?

The ones I know are really fun, up and good conversationalists. I guess they're for for me, but I don't know if my definition of "for" is like most ppl's'...

What about Asper+ writers? Are they for?

(Smiles) Yes, you guys are for.

If you were to assassinate a real person, who would it be and how?

I think it would be really nice to bury my foot in some kidnapper's butt. I'd also like to do the same to at least half of your politicians.

Do you have a Mission regiment?

Strangely enough, I don't. My body is always this fit, no matter what I eat, as usually I just sleep or read in between missions. Now you know why most of the other girls in KALI hate me.

Is Osama Bin Laden dead?

I've killed three of him already. They'll just clone more, as why bother.

Did you find Stephen Christmas? but... after he was convicted by Law?

Not at all. They are good girls always fall for the bad guy... I'm hardly what you'd consider a good girl. Anyway, I think Oh Phin is gonna... bad.

Do you watch The Gumballs? If so, do you feel it's right that they let the children watch their dads suffer on the hosing dog?

I'm more of an Amazing Race person, I just find interracial hosing or hosing alive nobody sees their legs. Give me a Mony Thai version of that show and maybe I'll consider giving it a look.

What in love?

I think I'm going to start kick ing more ass...

To-creator Marco Dimasano

Who are the main influences in your work?

Hayao Miyazaki, Kosuke Yamamura (Old My Goddess), Frank Miller, Jim Lee, Joe Madureira, J. Scott Campbell, Frank Cho, Pol Medina, Jr. Too many to count! I find influences every day.

Your comic book is a big collaborative work. How was it like working with 20 different chief editors and artists?

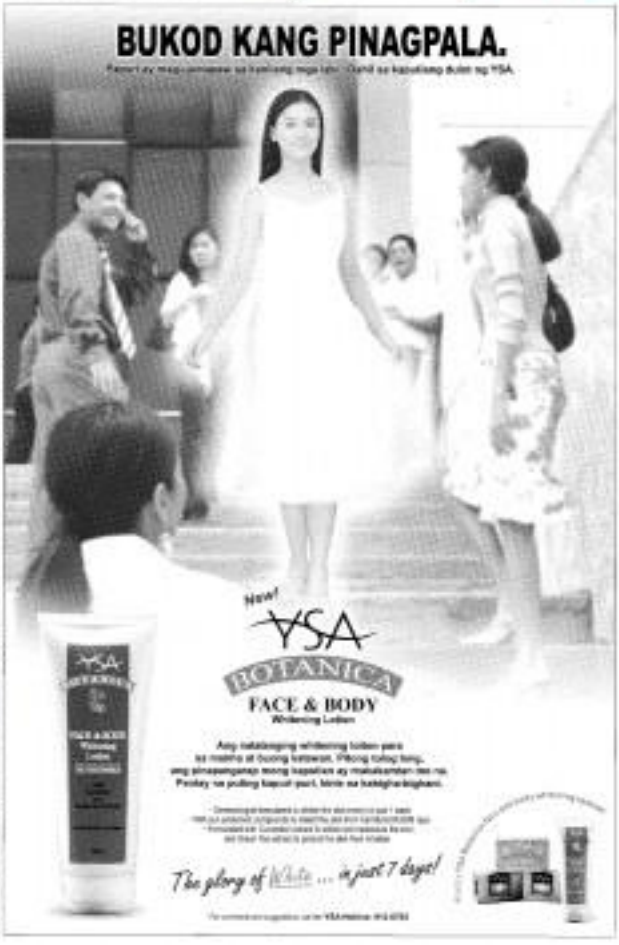
It was so interesting and exciting to be able to work with so many talented individuals, both newbies and veterans in the comic biz. I still find myself looking back and saying, "How did I manage to pull that off?"

Did you fear that the 20-people wouldn't be able to capture who Kai really is? That their wouldn't be able to handle her well?

Not really... I felt that I gave very clear directions for the characters. Also, I oversaw all of the stories and scripts at every stage, so things were kept in order. The variety in look that resulted was one of the best book's strengths. I love super cool, seeing the characters from more than one viewpoint, is always good.

Where do you think is the Pinoy comic book market going?

As far as I can tell, it will continue as it always has. The Filipino comic book creators will always have stories to tell, and they'll go for it the best way they can, whether to a well-printed independent comic or a photocopied saltcan. I just hope that there will always be Pinoy comic book fans out there to support them.



Lava is a many-splendored thing

(from page A1)

were fishing and gathering seafood in Batan. The lake is currently being developed into a recreational water sports resort by Korean investors. "Very soon," Antolin says proudly, "people will be heading southeast around the lake and bringing in their fish and boats. Props to our Hot Asian neighbors for keeping the tourists out little archipelago!"

Sandy shower

An ear headed back to the Pinatubo Volcano Spa, you would just imagine how driving through lahar country had turned me into a human pulverizer, and still with belaboring hair that would've chipped Ricky Reyes' manicure.

The Spa area is welcome respite, as cleansing up was next on my agenda. First, I had to take what they called a "sandy shower." Eh? More sand? Instead, as I submerged myself in a bed of volcanic ash, the first of my kind in the country. The sand, taken from Pinatubo, is sifted and mixed with volcanic ash, which is good for the skin and body because it heals wounds and eases arthritic pains.

A special sulfur facial mud pack, a mixture of liquid sulfur and water, was then applied. The sulfuric mask has an anti-microbial effect and tightens pores for healthier and cleaner skin (and it doesn't stick).

A shower, a dip in the hot outdoor stone baths and I was ready for my manicure/pedi that took me to the most beautiful a glorious time. It should be noted that the Pinatubo Spa gave jobs to over a hundred residents of nearby Barangay Sto. Tomas, who were previously resettled like eager young Stallonies. My personal manicurist in fact shared that she was trained for months in the ways of the Manila. From the way my body wonderfully felt like jello afterwards, I could vouch that the lesson was truly strong in her!

Spa-tacular

The Pinatubo Sulfuric Spa can accommodate up to 200 guests, and offers Shiatsu therapeutic healing therapy, outdoor massage, hot baths, a sulfuric volcanic ash spa and sulfur foot spa (one-year, say it with me: sulfur, so good!). But, there's a big, open-air restaurant that serves traditional Pinoy and Ilonggo food.

The spa is a joint venture of two entities represented from the Philippines Travel Agency Association, Baron Kim and Chris Wick. Its launch is in line with the Department of Tourism's campaign to develop and promote the Philippines as a growing health and wellness tourism destination in Asia. In fact, the Philippines participated in the International Tourism Show last March in Berlin, and the International Spa Conference last May in Singapore. Representing the country were the likes of the world-class Manukan Spa in Boracay and The Farm at San Benito in Batangas.

Tourism Secretary Ace Durano said the Pinatubo Spa "demonstrated the power of tourism ... what was once a deserted land was now a vibrant economy."

And who am I to disagree with the voice of the majestic mountainside, who could ever doubt the power of healing in bringing forth new life?

Did you cut loose? For more info, contact the DOT Cty of San Fernando, Pampanga at 045 961-0665/2913 or email: dotfo@yahoo.com or surf www.tourismcentral.com.ph.

THE SPA who loved me

ENTER SANDMEN. Buried alive in the volcanic sand bath

SULFUR, so good

BATTYMAN begins

It's funny

WOW, sing! Tourism Secretary Ace Durano reacts as the karaoke-hard-boiled tycoon